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JUDICIAL POLITICS
WILLIAM KRISTOL • DAVID M. WAGNER

Can They Turn It Around?

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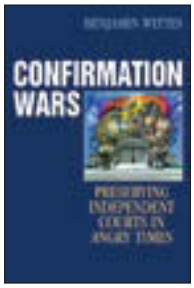

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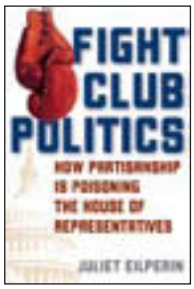

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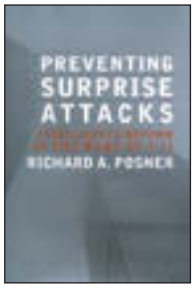

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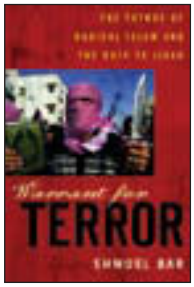

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Funniest Political Ad of 2006

To hear the critics' characterizations of the "racist" RNC ad targeting Tennessee Democrat Harold Ford Jr. in his Senate race against Republican Bob Corker, you might think that Ford had been depicted dancing around a boiling pot of white people with a bone through his nose while singing "Camptown Races." The reality is much less colorful.

The ad in question features a murderers' row of mostly schlubby-looking Tennesseans, resigning themselves to vote for Ford by reaffirming their weaknesses. A camouflaged hunter says, "Ford's right, I do have too many guns." A black-clad oil-slick of a man says, "So he took money from porn movie producers. I mean, who hasn't?" An older gent with a walrus mustache says, "Canada can take care of North Korea, they're not busy." (Our hypersensitive neighbor to the north, as one might have predicted, has registered a complaint with the White House.)

Making extra hay over Ford's appearance at a 2005 *Playboy* Super Bowl party (of which Ford has said, "I was there; I like football, and I like girls"), the ad also features a helium-voiced blonde bimbo enthusing, "I met Harold at the *Playboy* party!" Later, she cradles her fingers to her ear like a phone, saying, "Harold, call me."

Everyone from the NAACP to concerned Vanderbilt professors to former Republican senator Bill Cohen was incensed, comparing it to the worst of the worst Willie Horton subtexts. Even Corker, on whose behalf the RNC ran the ad, denounced it as over the top and tacky (uhhhh, Bob—first time seeing a political ad?).

Call The Scrapbook a miscegenation-loving race mixer, but we're confused. Why is it assumed that a white bimbo asking Ford to call her after meeting him at a *Playboy* party is racist? Statistics show that there are more white bimbos than black ones, on account of a higher general population of white women. Based on the one *Playboy* party The Scrapbook has attended (at Hef's mansion during the 2000 Democratic political convention), blonde bimbos were certainly overrepresented there.

The law of averages, then, would suggest that if Harold Ford was to be approached at a *Playboy* party, his admirer would most likely be white. Wouldn't it have been racist for the ad's casting director to assume that only a black bimbo would come on to Harold Ford?

The Scrapbook, an equal opportunity admirer of women, believes Harold Ford has the right to love white women, too. To infer from this really quite amusing ad that he is some Mandingo-like threat to white manhood is indeed a racist notion, telling us more about the offendee than the purported offender. So, though the RNC has capitulated and pulled the ad, we salute their moxie—not so much for breaking down racial taboos, as for irritating the Canadians. ♦

Worst Political Ad of 2006

Did the Bush administration deliberately lie the country into war with Iraq? Were Saddam Hussein's ties to international terrorists the product of fevered minds working in a shadowy Pentagon unit established to fabricate warmongering propaganda?

Few people really believe this. Fringe bloggers, Sidney Blumenthal, Lyndon LaRouche, Frank Rich, and . . . the Republican party? What's that, you say? The *Republican party*?

Apparently so. In what should go down as the most ignoble attack ad of the 2006 election cycle, Republicans in Pennsylvania paid for a mailing assaulting Christopher Carney, a former Pentagon counterterrorism analyst running for Congress as a Democrat. According to a report by Eli Lake in the *New York Sun*, the mailing warns: "Chris Carney failed our nation once. . . . Don't give Chris Carney a chance to FAIL us again."

The source for these claims? A breathless article in far-left *Mother Jones* magazine so full of conspiracy it reads like something you might find in a photocopied LaRouche pamphlet.

As it turns out, there's a reason for that. One of the coauthors of the article in question, headlined "The Lie Factory," is Robert Dreyfuss, contributor to LaRouche's *Executive Intelligence Review*. The *Mother Jones* article relies heavily on the word of a former Pentagon official, Karen Kwiatkowski, who is not exactly a credible source. In her writings, Kwiatkowski claims that the United States "went to war in Afghanistan—planned of course before 9/11/2001—due to some Taliban non-cooperation regarding a certain trans-Afghanistan oil pipeline, and the requisite security for said pipeline." She also believes the United States is fascist.

"Bush and his neoconservative foreign policy implementers believe they are today's men of destiny. But the claim of destiny for a whole nation or a constructed state has long been the ultimate tool of the fascist, the supernationalist, the propagandist worthy

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of a Lenin or a Hitler or a Pol Pot."

Two years ago, this poisoned well was being drawn upon by Ted Kennedy for his Bush-bashing foreign policy speeches. We said then that he should be ashamed to avail himself of such "expertise." But he at least had a partisan excuse. What excuse do Pennsylvania Republicans have for basing their attacks on the word of someone who compares George W. Bush—the head of their party, after all—to Hitler? ♦

'Nonpartisanship,' Washington style

A supposedly nonpartisan group calling itself the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, has produced a congressional "scorecard" rating legislators on "issues that matter to Iraq and Afghanistan vets." The particular issues the group has in mind are things like funding for more body armor and higher appropriations for V.A. hospitals. According to Iraq veteran Paul Rieckhoff, the founder of IAVA, "Politicians say they support the troops. But whose votes back up their rhetoric, and who's just wearing an American flag lapel pin?"

Why does The Scrapbook say the group is "supposedly" nonpartisan? Hint number one: Rieckhoff announced the IAVA ratings with a post at Arianna Huffington's heavily left-leaning blog, *huffingtonpost.com*. Hint number two: Rieckhoff's first big media splash came in an April 30, 2004, press release from the John Kerry campaign: "Iraq Veteran Paul Rieckhoff to Deliver Democratic Radio Address Saturday." This was a rebuttal following the weekly presidential radio address. The press release went on to say that he would talk "about his experiences as a soldier in Iraq and the need for leadership in Washington that matches the courage and capability of the soldiers he served with."

Hint number three: The IAVA ratings manage a rare feat. They give every Senate Democrat a higher grade than every Senate Republican. The lowest-ranking Democrat, Ben Nelson of Nebraska, gets a B-. The highest ranking Republican, Rhode Island's Lincoln Chafee, gets a C. As anyone familiar with the construction of political scorecards knows, such statistically "pure" results are no coincidence.

To achieve unalloyed partisanship in its rankings, the IAVA engaged in some creative reverse engineering. It selected as "key" issues for its scorecard a high number of party-line votes on amendments to the defense authorization bill. Lo and behold, when you do that, the entire Democratic leadership ends up with A's for "supporting the troops," and the likes of John Warner and John McCain with D's. Even by the low standards of Washington interest groups, these rankings are a crock. Iraq and Afghan vets deserve more honest representation than this. ♦

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Casual

Heartbreak Hotel

Museums are always changing, and the change is rarely good. In 1999, David Brooks recorded the decline and fall of the Smithsonian's Museum of American History in these pages. The changing presentation of the monuments on the national mall, well covered in The Weekly Standard by Andrew Ferguson and Catesby Leigh, has been nothing less than a disaster. It gives me no pleasure now to report on the "progress" of another great American landmark: Elvis Presley's Graceland.

Graceland has always been a strange kind of museum. Purchased by a 22-year-old Elvis Presley in 1957, it was his only real adult home. Upon his death, Elvis left the property in a trust to his daughter, Lisa Marie. The trust was managed first by his father, Vernon, and later by Elvis's ex-wife, Priscilla. Facing a mounting pile of bills, Priscilla decided to open Graceland to the public in 1982. It has been minting money ever since. Today tickets for adults range from $22 to $55, depending on the tour you take; Graceland records some 600,000 ticket-buying visitors per year.

When Lisa Marie turned 25, she took control of the trust, although she allowed Priscilla to guide much of the handling of Graceland. For a while, all was well. Then, in 2005, Lisa Marie sold 85 percent of the estate to an entertainment conglomerate, CKX, Inc. Lisa Marie still technically owns Graceland itself, but the administration of the museum was turned over to CKX, which immediately, and ominously, proclaimed that it wanted to "enhance the visitor's experience."

I am but a casual Elvis fan. I cannot recite his full catalogue from the Sun years or trace the complete Dutch genealogy of "Colonel" Tom Parker the way real devotees can. In the Elvis world, this matters. One of my colleagues at the office, for instance, made his first pilgrimage to Graceland back when Elvis's grandma Minnie Mae still lived there. I have, however, been to Graceland before. And the museum's recent transformation is obvious even to me.

When I visited in 1996, Graceland was seductively charming. The audiotour featured Priscilla's anecdotes about life with Elvis. She talked about his obsession with food—how he would sometimes request the same dish for dinner night after night for months at a time. She recalled the frequent gunplay and how Elvis once shot a television in his basement TV room so he wouldn't have to get up from the couch to turn it off.

The tour featured Elvis's massive collection of law enforcement badges. He had asked nearly every lawman in the Union for honorary status. His legendary meeting with Richard Nixon occurred because he wanted the president to deputize him as a "federal agent at large."

But the best part of the old Graceland tour was the wall featuring his correspondence. Elvis was a prolific letter-writer. His note to J. Edgar Hoover was my favorite, but there were a bunch on display, each testifying to his wonderfully sincere goofiness.

Today, nearly all of this is gone, banished in the attempt to make Elvis into some sort of modern-day saint. Priscilla has been removed from the audiotour, replaced by her dippy daughter, who seems to have no concrete recollections of her father other than the "vibe" he gave the place.

Gone is any mention of Elvis's eating habits. Gone is any hint of the reckless use of firearms. Gone is the shot-out TV set. I was unable to find a single one of his letters. Even Elvis's death has been airbrushed. Where Priscilla once hinted at its dark nature in the audiotour, Lisa Marie makes his expiring at the age of 42 seem unremarkable.

Graceland now emphasizes Elvis's movie roles (the better to sell DVDs) and charity work. All of the rough edges that made Elvis endearing have been sanded to soft, boring curves. To hear the current telling, you'd think he was a rockabilly Horatio Alger.

But this attempt to tame the wild side of Elvis seems doomed; the real man was too great a figure to be bent into submission. Try as they might, the Lilliputians can't sanitize everything.

In one of the displays at the new Graceland, the museum tries to intellectualize Elvis, claiming he was an avid reader. On his desk is a stack of books. One of them, *The Coming Aquarian Age*, lies open to Chapter XI, titled "The Coming Aquarian Age and the Emancipation of Woman." On the page, Elvis has left three small notes in the margins.

The first, by the chapter title, asks, "NEW?"

The second observes, "ENLIGHTENMENT."

And sitting alone in the bottom right-hand corner is the third, where Elvis has scribbled, with no further explanation, "KARATE."

Jonathan V. Last

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Defending the DOD

William Kristol's "Huffing and Puffing" (Oct. 23) manipulates Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's comments at a recent press conference and misleads your readers. Kristol quotes at length from the October 11 press conference during which the secretary opened his remarks by noting the sixth anniversary of the terrorist attack on the USS *Cole*. The secretary then moved into a discussion of the threat posed by North Korea.

Kristol interrupts Secretary Rumsfeld's remarks by interjecting a question, asking, "But on the sixth anniversary of the attack on the USS *Cole*, what are we doing about these threats and trends?" He then proceeds to use the rest of the secretary's remarks—in which Mr. Rumsfeld discusses the need for the cooperation of the international community on stopping North Korea—to answer a question the secretary was never asked.

Kristol conducts this misleading parsing of Secretary Rumsfeld's statement so that he can make his point that, in his words, "the lesson Rumsfeld takes from the USS *Cole*, *and all that happened since*, is this: "We're dependent on the 'international community' and we need to cooperate with others" (emphasis added).

Though it may strike some as odd that Kristol takes issue with the notion of the "need to cooperate with others," Secretary Rumsfeld said nothing of the sort. His discussion of the international community pertained specifically to the president's policy on North Korea, not our reaction to the *Cole* bombing or other terrorist attacks. If anything, in fact, the secretary's comments on the international community could be read as exactly the opposite of what Kristol implies. Indeed, a few days earlier, the secretary noted at another press event that "the international community's going to have to do a lot better or else face a world that will be quite different, with multiple nuclear nations and . . . the added risk of these very lethal weapons falling into the hands of nonstate entities."

A full transcript of the secretary's comments in both press conferences—absent

Kristol's commentary—is available at *www.defenselink.mil/transcripts*.

Dorrance Smith
Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C.

Ex-Page Speaks Frankly

Charles Krauthammer adeptly articulates the absurdity of the Mark Foley scandal ("Sex Scandals and Double Standards," Oct. 16) by demonstrating the double standards that plague the House of Representatives. As a former congressional page (class of '89), I had to endure the Barney Frank scandal. My page class also had the wonderful opportunity of listening to Rep. Frank speak at our graduation. But instead of the typical graduation speech, we were privileged to listen to his justification of why his male prostitution ring was acceptable to him and to other Democratic members of Congress. That's certainly one speech I will never forget.

Lara Stead Barrera
Warrenton, Va.

Correction

Algis Valiunas suggests in "A Russian Master" (Sept. 25) that W.W. Norton & Co. has provided the "first-ever English edition of Chekhov's *Complete Plays*," but in the late 1990s Smith and Kraus published Chekhov's complete dramatic works, translated by Carol Rocamora in three volumes.

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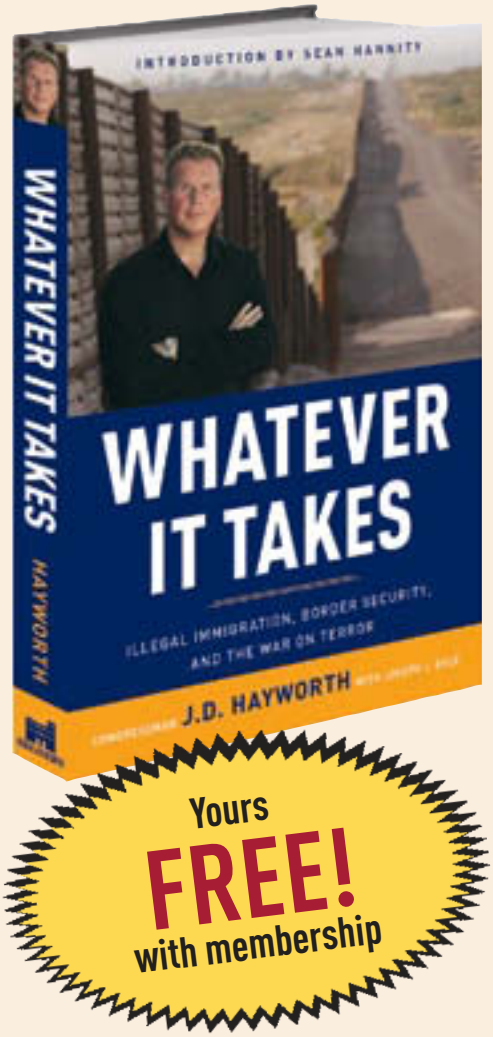
America's Border Crisis



Poll after poll shows that Americans are fed up with illegal immigration. But as things stand now, Congress and the president have no intention of doing what needs to be done to stop illegal immigrants and even terrorists from crossing freely into the United States from Canada and Mexico: securing our borders, strengthening our immigration laws, and enforcing those laws. These problems will not be solved so long as citizens leave it to Washington — yet the situation grows more serious every day. After 9/11, do we really want to take the chance that no terrorists will try to take advantage of our porous borders? Congressman J.D. Hayworth says no. In *Whatever It Takes: Illegal Immigration, Border Security and the War on Terror,* he explains just how serious the problem has become, what the stakes are, and what we must do now to protect our republic from what is nothing less than an invasion.

Unless something is done, argues Hayworth, it is only a matter of time before Americans pay another catastrophic price for our inexcusable dereliction in enforcing our immigration laws and controlling our borders. Our nation of laws and *legal* immigrants is under attack by an unholy alliance of big business, big labor, the government of Mexico, Republican and Democrat political operatives cynically looking to woo Hispanic voters, and left-wing extremists out to alter the character of America. And any dissention is met with hostility.

But Congressman Hayworth won't back down — and in *Whatever It Takes,* he gives us a solid plan to stop this madness before it brings disaster to our nation. This book is a wake-up call to all concerned citizens to demand that our government take the steps that we know will work to stop illegal immigration and protect our country.

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Of Senators and Judges

In the midterm elections of November 1986, six years into the Reagan presidency, the Republican party lost control of the Senate. Barely six weeks beforehand, that still-GOP-led body had handily confirmed two crucial Reagan Supreme Court appointments: Associate Justice William Rehnquist's promotion to the chief's job and Antonin Scalia's nomination to the resulting open seat. But the newly Democratic Senate of 1987 would not prove so accommodating. Robert Bork, the president's first choice to fill the vacancy left by retiring Justice Lewis Powell, would be famously—and roughly—rejected. Those midterm elections wound up mattering rather a lot.

They weren't the whole story, of course. As an individual, Bork was considerably more controversial than Scalia or Rehnquist had ever been. And with the court closely divided, the confirmation of a second judicial conservative was going to generate stiffer resistance than the first. But Bork would have had a much better shot with a Republican-controlled Senate—both because there simply would have been more votes for him, and because the majority controls the schedule and shapes the debate.

The effect of Bork's defeat did not end with Anthony Kennedy's joining the court in his place. The experience of the Bork loss undoubtedly influenced President George H.W. Bush's selection of a paper-trail-less nominee for his first court opening, David Souter. So it's reasonable to say that the Republican loss of the Senate in 1986 set back the effort to rein in the Supreme Court and establish a constitutionalist majority there for two decades. Only in the past two years with the nominations and confirmations of John Roberts and Samuel Alito has that goal been advanced.

Advanced—but not reached. Now the court teeters in the balance. President Bush may well have another vacancy to fill in the next two years, and his successor will probably have at least one or two new justices to appoint. A Republican Senate would confirm the next Roberts or Alito. A Democratic Senate might well not. And furthermore, facing a Democratic Senate, President Bush, or a Republican successor, might preemptively compromise and pick a Kennedy rather than a Roberts or an Alito.

What's more, right now, 16 of the 179 authorized judicial slots on the federal courts of appeal are vacant. So are 33 of the 678 district court positions. With a Republican Senate, President Bush could continue to reshape the federal judiciary over the next two years. Facing a Democratic Senate, he would make much less progress on the constitutionalist agenda at the heart of today's conservatism.

So which party controls the Senate for the next two years matters a lot. One would expect Republican Senate candidates and the party committees and independent groups that support them to be making an issue of judges. After all, the issue is a proven winner. In 2004, based only on the fights over appellate court nominees—before Bush's Supreme Court nominations—the question of judges was a major issue in several Senate races, and helped Republicans make a net gain of four Senate seats.

Indeed, in 2004, while picking up Senate seats—five open seats in the South and Daschle's seat in South Dakota, lost to John Thune—Republicans gained only three seats in the House. If one excludes the five-seat pick-up in Texas courtesy of Tom DeLay's redistricting, the GOP actually lost two seats in the House. In other words, Republican Senate candidates outperformed House candidates in 2004—and the focus on senators' distinctive responsibility in confirming judges was part of the reason.

The ridiculous discovery by the New Jersey Supreme Court last week of a constitutional requirement to extend the rights incident to marriage to same-sex couples is a useful reminder of what is at stake in arguments over judicial activism. Obviously, the federal courts matter even more than the individual state courts. And yet, so far as THE WEEKLY STANDARD has been able to determine, no Senate candidate and no independent group is running ads on the issue of judges. Nor are the candidates making this issue a centerpiece of their campaigns.

There is still time to remind voters of Virginia and Tennessee, of Missouri and Montana, all reasonably conservative states, of what is at stake as they cast their Senate votes. There is still time to remind the voters of Pennsylvania and Ohio, also reasonably conservative states, of what is at stake. There is still time to remind the voters of New Jersey that Robert Menendez's first vote upon being elevated to the Senate was to filibuster their own Samuel Alito.

The issue of judges is both substantively important and politically advantageous to Republican Senate candidates. They don't have that much else going for them. It would be good if President Bush, the Republican committees, the independent groups, and the candidates themselves reminded voters that when they cast their votes for senator on November 7, they are also helping to determine the shape of the federal courts.

—William Kristol

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Joementum Returns

Ever since Ned Lamont's primary triumph, Lieberman has been ahead. BY MATTHEW CONTINETTI

Hartford

SHORTLY AFTER 11:00 P.M. on August 8, 2006, Joe Lieberman's decades-long political career reached a low point. That was when Lieberman took the stage inside the atrium at the Goodwin Hotel here to concede defeat in the Democratic primary to antiwar businessman Ned Lamont, who had won 52 percent to 48 percent. Lieberman, the three-term incumbent senator, was plainly frustrated. His face was lined. He frowned often. His family, friends, and loyal supporters were with him, but the prominent Connecticut Democrats who only hours before greeted visitors in the hotel lobby—including Senator Christopher Dodd—were nowhere to be found. Almost immediately, Lieberman came under pressure from prominent figures in his party, such as Democratic National Committee chairman Howard Dean and Massachusetts senator John Kerry, to step aside and allow Lamont to coast to victory on Election Day.

Times change. Today Lieberman, running as an independent, leads Lamont in poll after poll, usually by double digits. (In most polls the Republican in the race, Alan Schlesinger, has the support of only 6 percent of respondents.) In fact, the striking thing about this general election campaign has been its lack of volatility. Lieberman has been leading by significant margins ever since primary night. An August 17 Quinnipiac University poll showed Lieberman beating Lamont among likely voters 53 percent to 41 percent. The most recent Quinnipiac poll shows Lieberman beating Lamont among likely voters 52 percent to 35 percent. Despite spending more than $12 million of his own money since entering the primary campaign, Lamont has been unable to close the gap.

For Lieberman, the turnaround began on primary night, when he rebuffed calls to withdraw and declared he would run as an independent. "I think the primary was a liberation," says Marshall Wittmann, a senior fellow at the centrist Democratic Leadership Council. "We saw the emergence of a new candidacy." Lieberman's concession speech, seen throughout the state live on the 11 o'clock news, was a blueprint for a campaign strategy based on reaching out to more conservative (and less antiwar) Democrats, sympathetic Republicans, and disaffected independents. "The old politics of partisan polarization won today," Lieberman said. In place of polarization Lieberman offered the electorate "a new politics of unity and purpose." Later on, he addressed voters directly. "I am confident that we can find common ground and secure a better future," he said. "That is exactly the mission I ask you to join me in tonight." Listening to Lieberman, you might have thought that the primary had never occurred.

It also helped Lieberman that Lamont seemed unable to confront the reality that, having won the primary, he would now have to win a general election in which not only Democrats vote. Lamont's August 8 victory speech was a wispy version of the speech he had delivered to great success among crowds of antiwar Democrats and the progressive bloggers who had done so much to promote his candidacy; it was not designed to appeal beyond his core supporters. "Stay the course: That's not a winning strategy in Iraq," Lamont said. "And it's not a winning strategy in America." He called for universal health care and the withdrawal of troops from Iraq. Where Lieberman was ecumenical, Lamont was parochial: He specifically mentioned the debt he owed the Democratic "grassroots" and "netroots." And Lamont also erred in allowing two of the most polarizing figures in American politics, Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson, neither of whom is from Connecticut, to appear at his side.

It was a sudden role reversal. Lieberman, down but not out, had become the insurgent; Lamont, riding high, had become just another Democratic Senate nominee. After the primary, Lieberman returned to the stump with his new message and energy. Lamont retired to the family vacation home in Maine. Lieberman changed course and fired some on his campaign staff who had contributed to his loss. Lamont made no such changes. Lieberman brought on old hands like Dan Gerstein, who had served as communications director in his Capitol Hill office and in his 2004 presidential campaign but had not been involved in politics since. Lamont turned to David Sirota, a rising Democratic strategist and adviser to Montana governor Brian Schweitzer.

"I wouldn't say it's a commanding lead," Gerstein said last week, as he ate his lunch at Lieberman's campaign headquarters. What has brought vitality, resolve, and the advantage to Lieberman, Gerstein worries, may not be enough to bring voters to the polls on Election Day. Because he is the Democratic nominee, Lamont enjoys the party's institutional support and get-out-the-vote operation. Lieberman has no

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Getty Images / Bob Falcetti

Primary night: Ned Lamont's last good moment

such structural advantage, though as of September 30, according to Political Money Line, he did have more cash on hand than Lamont. Another problem for Lieberman is that, as an independent, he will appear third on the ballot. Gerstein is concerned voters may not make it that far. He says the campaign plans a "major" voter education effort in these last days to ensure supporters know where Lieberman's name will appear.

Lamont draws his support from highly educated, affluent, antiwar professionals living along the coast and in the suburbs of New York City. These are typical Democratic voters. Lieberman's coalition is more unusual. It includes those Democrats who voted for him in the primary—lower-middle- to middle-class voters who are more conservative on social issues but support a progressive economic policy (i.e., higher taxes on the rich) and want a strong national defense. Gerstein estimates Lieberman draws support from about 35 percent of Connecticut Democrats.

Lieberman's advisers say that as long as he wins more than 30 percent of the Democratic vote, his reelection is almost assured. Which is where the rest of the Lieberman coalition enters the picture. Gerstein says that, because there is no strong Republican in the race, Lieberman—who despite his quirks is about as mainstream a Democrat as you are likely to find—enjoys support from about "65 to 70 percent" of Connecticut Republicans. Among independents, Gerstein estimates Lieberman draws 50 percent support. At a time when many voters are unhappy with the politics of the nation's capital, Lieberman is in an enviable position: A vote for him is both an expression of a desire to "change the way business is done" in Washington and a vote for an 18-year incumbent senator. Lieberman is a party of one. He is not a Republican. He is not a typical Democrat. And yet, because of his experience, he also is not a "risky" vote.

The Iraq war is unpopular in Connecticut, as it is throughout the country. While the Lieberman campaign believes the senator's continued support for the war has hurt his candidacy, the damage does not seem to have been fatal. The reason for this is something of a paradox. Voters may not approve of Lieberman's stance on Iraq, but they also see his steadfastness (or stubbornness) on the war as evidence of his integrity. You meet voters here who don't approve of President Bush's policy on Iraq but still "like Joe." They trust and respect him. He has their vote.

More than anything, Lieberman's perceived affinity for President Bush was responsible for his primary defeat. All summer long, Lamont supporters paraded around the state showing Democrats images of "the kiss": the infamous moment at the 2005 State of the Union when President Bush enthusiastically embraced Lieberman and pulled him in close. These days "the kiss" seems to resonate only with Lamont's most vocal advocates. Lieberman has done everything possible to point out those issues on which he and the president (and the president's party) differ. He campaigns alongside idiosyncratic Republicans like Jack Kemp and Sen. Susan Collins of Maine and New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg. Those Democrats with whom he campaigns—Sen. Mary Landrieu appeared in Connecticut last week—are more conventional representatives of their party and vocal critics of President Bush.

One day last week, former Democratic senator Bob Kerrey of Nebraska, now the president of the New School in New York, visited Hartford to show his support for Lieberman. The two participated in a panel on homeland security issues at the University of Connecticut School of Business here. For Lieberman, it was an opportunity to stress national security and the war on terror. It was a chance to attack Lamont for weakness and the administration for failing to live up to the task. And it was a moment to have some fun; a demonstration of how much has changed since summertime.

Kerrey was late to the panel. When he arrived, he greeted Lieberman with a warm hug. Lieberman didn't miss a beat. As they separated, he turned to some nearby reporters, pointed to Kerrey, and said, "I told him—no kisses." ♦

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The Stem Cell Hard Sell

Missouri's clone wars.

BY DUNCAN CURRIE

St. Louis

MICHAEL J. FOX was right—at least partially. "What you do in Missouri," Fox said in his now famous TV ad, "matters to millions of Americans—Americans like me." He never mentioned Amendment 2. He never mentioned the word "cloning." He merely endorsed Democratic Senate candidate Claire McCaskill, the state auditor, and spoke against GOP incumbent Jim Talent. But the subtext was clear: Vote for McCaskill—and while you're at it, vote "yes" on Amendment 2.

"As you might know, I care deeply about stem cell research," said Fox, a longtime and visibly suffering Parkinson's patient, in a spot that first aired during the World Series. "In Missouri you can elect Claire McCaskill, who shares my hope for cures. Unfortunately, Senator Jim Talent opposes expanding stem cell research. Senator Talent even wanted to criminalize the science that gives us a chance for hope."

This was misleading. Talent once cosponsored a Senate bill to ban human cloning, but then withdrew his name last February, fearing it might imperil a new form of research called "altered nuclear transfer," which can yield embryonic stem cells without destroying human embryos. Talent supports that research—indeed, he supports *any* form of stem cell research that leaves embryos intact and doesn't entail cloning. While Talent opposes Amendment 2, the failure of that amendment would not "criminalize" anything.

But Fox was correct to imply that the fate of Amendment 2 will reverberate far beyond Missouri. What is Amendment 2? Depends on whom you ask. Supporters insist it would write a ban on human cloning into the Missouri constitution and codify an ethical framework for stem cell research. Opponents claim it would actually *legalize* cloning despite appearing to outlaw it. Who's right?

Michael J. Fox was correct to imply that the fate of Amendment 2 will reverberate far beyond Missouri.

Donn Rubin, chairman of the amendment-backing Missouri Coalition for Lifesaving Cures, puts it bluntly: "There really is no shame among the opponents." Last week, in a testy radio debate on Missouri's KWMU, Rubin stressed that Amendment 2 would prevent the creation of "Dolly the human" and ensure that any form of "somatic cell nuclear transfer" (SCNT) allowed under federal law would also be permissible in Missouri. The urgency of the amendment, he added, stemmed from recent efforts in the state legislature to prohibit SCNT.

According to Rubin, the "reprehensible" and "drastic" bills being mulled in Jefferson City would penalize "doctors and patients" and "throw them in jail with drug dealers and arsonists." Indeed, he said, by criminalizing medical research, the anti-SCNT legislation would mandate that a cured patient's first steps "out of a wheelchair" would be "into a jail cell."

His foil, Cathy Ruse, spokeswoman for Missourians Against Human Cloning, treated these remarks with bemused derision. "That is hysterical," she said. "No one wants to jail doctors and patients." Remember, said Ruse, "Embryonic stem cell research is already legal today—it's happening across the state." Amendment 2 would not change that. But it would carve out a constitutional right to perform SCNT—which, according to Ruse, is the same thing as cloning.

That gets to the crux of the debate: What qualifies as "cloning"? And does somatic cell nuclear transfer fall under that rubric? In SCNT, a nucleus taken from a body (somatic) cell, which contains the DNA of an organism, is transferred into an egg cell that has had its own nucleus removed, thus creating an ovum that is a genetic replica of the original body cell. This egg, if implanted and brought to term, would produce a cloned organism.

The text of Amendment 2 adds up to nearly 2,000 words. Slogging through it can be headache-inducing, given the dense biomedical jargon. But it states a few points quite plainly: "Any stem cell research permitted under federal law may be conducted in Missouri, and any stem cell therapies and cures permitted under federal law may be provided to patients in Missouri." Also: "No person may clone or attempt to clone a human being." So far, no disputes.

But then comes the definition of "cloning": "to implant in a uterus or attempt to implant in a uterus anything other than the product of fertilization of an egg of a human female by a sperm of a human male for the purpose of initiating a pregnancy that could result in the

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creation of a human fetus, or the birth of a human being." In other words, cloning is equated with implantation.

SCNT is in fact the first, necessary step in cloning. But as long as the egg it produces is kept in a test tube, Amendment 2 declares that it is not a clone. The embryos created with this technique are a source of human stem cells, and the right to create them is the point of Amendment 2—hence, it refers to "any scientific or medical research involving human stem cells derived from in vitro fertilization blastocysts or from somatic cell nuclear transfer."

Most major scientific organizations strongly favor SCNT—including the National Academy of Sciences, the National Institutes of Health, the American Medical Association, and the International Society for Stem Cell Research—but also define it as "therapeutic cloning." According to the Association of American Medical Colleges, SCNT "involves removing the nucleus of an unfertilized egg cell, replacing it with the material from the nucleus of a 'somatic cell' (a skin, heart, or nerve cell, for example), and stimulating this cell to begin dividing. Once the cell begins dividing, stem cells can be extracted 5-6 days later and used for research."

"It's not cloning a person," Rubin told me last week. "Our initiative bans any attempt to do that." True. But the relevant questions then become: Must a human embryo be implanted in a uterus for it to be a "clone"? Or does fusing the nucleus of an "egg cell" and the nucleus of a "somatic cell" amount to creating a "cloned" embryo? Will voters recognize the difference?

On November 7, Missourians will be able to read a brief "fair ballot" summary of Amendment 2 in the voting booth. The summary totals nearly 140 words. Among other things, it tells voters that a "yes" vote will "ban human cloning or attempted cloning." In 2005, Missourians Against Human Cloning sued to have the ballot language changed, arguing it was deceptive. A court ruled against them, finding the summary fair, accurate, and impartial.

It has thus been an uphill battle for Amendment 2 foes. The Missouri Coalition for Lifesaving Cures has spent nearly $30 million supporting the initiative. They get succor from the state's influential science lobby. Most Democrats favor Amendment 2. So do Governor Matt Blunt, a popular Republican, and former GOP senator John Danforth, an honorary co-chairman of the Cures coalition. Danforth has said the amendment "will save lives" but also preserve "the sanctity of life."

By far the biggest financial backers of the coalition have been James and Virginia Stowers, two cancer survivors who used their fortune to establish the nonprofit Stowers Institute for Medical Research in Kansas City. According to a study trumpeted on the coalition's website, "the planned 'Phase II' expansion of the Stowers Institute . . . will only go forward in Missouri if Amendment 2 passes and ensures that the Institute will be able to conduct any stem cell research allowed under federal law."

Though the amendment has polled extremely well since its introduction, critics have lately narrowed the gap. Missouri is, after all, a red state with a hefty pro-life movement. After the Michael J. Fox clip aired, Missourians Against Human Cloning rolled out their own celebrity-filled ad, which included St. Louis Cardinals pitcher Jeff Suppan, NFL quarterback Kurt Warner, actress Patricia Heaton, and *Passion of the Christ* star James Caviezel. This group also claims the amendment will hurt women by encouraging an exploitative market in human eggs.

On both sides, the media blitz shows no signs of abating. Amendment 2 may or may not deserve passage. But let's hope Missourians at least understand what they're voting for—a constitutional rubber stamp for therapeutic cloning. ♦

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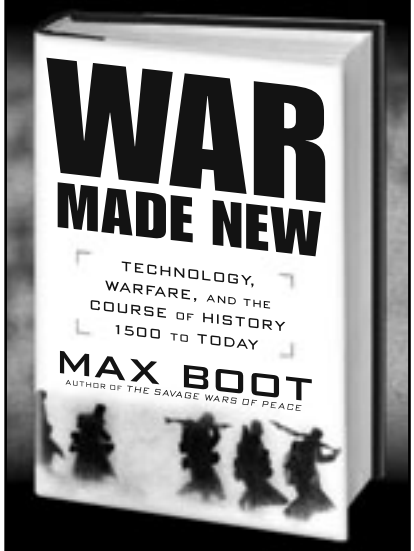

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Gay Marriage Lite

New Jersey's high court doesn't quite go all the way. BY DAVID M. WAGNER

If not New Jersey, then (besides Massachusetts) where? A liberal state with no explicit prohibition on same-sex marriage in state law, and no law barring state officials from performing such marriages for out-of-staters—New Jersey would seem the perfect state in which to persuade the highest court to duplicate the Massachusetts holding. There the supreme judicial court declared that no rational basis exists for restricting marriage to opposite-sex couples, and that same-sex marriage must, then, be enacted posthaste.

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Yet it didn't quite happen that way in Trenton. Instead, in *Lewis* v. *Harris*, handed down October 25, the Supreme Court of New Jersey went for what, in the present state of the marriage debate, passes for a Solomonic compromise: Hold that same-sex couples must be given all the legal benefits of marriage, but leave to the legislature the issue of whether the resulting legal relationship is to be called "marriage." This is similar to the path followed by the court in Vermont in creating those states' "civil unions." For the New Jersey court, no "substantial" basis exists for withholding from same-sex couples the benefits of marriage. Yet one may exist for reserving the name "marriage"—and the social symbolism that goes with it—to opposite-sex couples.

Remarkably, for an opinion that insists on equalizing the rights of same- and opposite-sex couples, *Lewis* v. *Harris* nonetheless recognizes that the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark 1967 decision *Loving* v. *Virginia*, striking down racial restrictions on marriage, does *not* create a "right to marry" independent of all traditional and societal understandings of what marriage is. "The heart of the [1967] case," the New Jersey court notes, "was invidious discrimination based on race, the very evil that motivated the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment."

"Despite the rich diversity of this State," the court continues (passing the hanky), "the tolerance and goodness of its people, and the many recent advances made by gays and lesbians toward achieving social acceptance and equality under the law, we cannot find that a right to same-sex marriage is so deeply rooted in the traditions, history, and conscience of the people of this State that it ranks as a fundamental right." New Jerseyans are good, it seems, but not *that* good.

After so holding, the court turns to the passage of the New Jersey Constitution that most closely tracks the U.S. Constitution's equal protection clause. For any suspect government classification (such as the one reserving marriage to male-female couples), New Jersey weighs "three factors: the nature of the right at stake, the extent to which the challenged statutory scheme restricts that right, and the public need for the statutory restriction."

The court then sums up the extensive rights that New Jersey has bestowed upon same-sex couples, and notes the "remaining" rights that are not included in the state's Domestic Partnership Act. Is there a reason, the court asks, for not sliding all the way down this slope?

"The State does not argue that limiting marriage to the union of a man

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and a woman is needed to encourage procreation or to create the optimal living environment for children." California did not press an affirmative case for traditional marriage either; that state's intermediate appeals court nonetheless deferred to legislative judgment. But New Jersey's legislature has *not* said that marriage is one man and one woman, and it *has* said that distinctions based on sexual orientation are to be removed. Given this legislative background, it takes perhaps only a smidgen of judicial activism to conclude: "It is difficult to understand how withholding the remaining 'rights and benefits' from committed same-sex couples is compatible with a 'reasonable conception of basic human dignity and autonomy.'" The court then ordered the legislature to correct its oversight in the next 180 days.

Despite the admittedly "extraordinary remedy," the four-judge majority nonetheless scolds its three dissenting colleagues, who wanted to order up same-sex marriage right now, Massachusetts-style. "We cannot escape," it says, "the political reality that the shared societal meaning of marriage—passed down through the common law into our statutory law—has always been the union of a man and a woman. To alter that meaning would render a profound change in the public consciousness of a social institution of ancient origin."

Speculation will swirl as to what drove this strange mixture of activism and restraint. It could be a set-up: If the legislature responds by enacting Vermont-style civil unions that are not called "marriage," the court can, in inevitable litigation to follow, hold that the legislature had not shown a "substantial" reason for a difference of nomenclature. The result would be a Massachusetts-style same-sex marriage mandate, only without an election-year backlash. Or it could be they blinked: Public resistance to same-sex marriage is being felt in the courts, and the New Jersey Supreme Court is, by its own admission—nay, proclamation—sensitive to changes in "times and attitudes." ♦

Hip, Hip, Al Hurra!

Explaining America to the Arab world—with no help from the State Department. BY ROBERT SATLOFF

AMERICAN PUBLIC DIPLOMACY in the Middle East did not have a good week. An Arabic-speaking State Department official named Alberto Fernandez made news on October 21 when he spoke too candidly about U.S. missteps in Iraq on Al Jazeera, the Arabic satellite television channel based in Qatar. Not only was Fernandez obliged to eat his words, but the coverage of the episode in the U.S. media was incomplete and misleading. It's an all too familiar story to anyone engaged—as I am—in the business of attempting to communicate with Middle Eastern audiences via Arabic-language satellite TV.

What most media reports of the incident left out was that Al Jazeera had set Fernandez up. Fernandez went on the air immediately after a spokesman for Saddam Hussein's outlawed Baath party appeared under the pseudonym Abu Mohammed. Al Jazeera provided Saddam's flack airtime to lay down a series of conditions that U.S. commanders would need to meet before Saddam's followers would *consider* negotiating over the withdrawal of U.S. troops—little matters like the reconstitution of Saddam's army, the scrapping of every law adopted since Saddam was removed from power, and the recognition of pro-Saddam insurgents as "the sole representatives of the Iraqi people."

After the Baathist was done, Fernandez came on, and the Al Jazeera host lobbed a series of "Have you stopped beating your wife?" questions at him, including whether America was ready to begin talks with the Baath party. To his credit, Fernandez dismissed the entire conversation as "farcical" and "very removed from reality." Later in the show, when describing the intense political debate over Iraq in our midterm elections, he went on to utter his too-honest-by-half words about the problems of U.S. policy.

But media reports also failed to explain how Fernandez, one of Foggy Bottom's finest public affairs officers, came to be on Al Jazeera in the first place. His appearance was the result of a decision made by Undersecretary of State for Public Diplomacy Karen Hughes earlier this year to reverse U.S. policy and encourage U.S. officials to appear on the Zarqawi-friendly, Hezbollah-cozy network famous for referring to suicide bombings as "so-called terrorism" and "martyrdom-seeking operations."

Fernandez's experience shows why this decision was unwise. U.S. outreach to Arabs is not advanced by having a U.S. diplomat engage in a he-said/she-said with Saddam's flack. Indeed, it's hard to imagine anything more apt to erode the image in Arab minds of Saddam brought low, captured cowering in a spider hole, than a U.S. diplomat forced to respond to the blatherings of a Baathist on an Al Jazeera talk show.

This error of U.S. policy is all the more frustrating in that there exists an Arabic-language satellite TV sta-

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tion that is eager to showcase U.S. officials without distortion—yet over the past year its invitations to senior officials of the White House, the National Security Council, and the State Department have been all but ignored.

That station is Al Hurra, the U.S. government-funded station established in 2003 to battle for the hearts and minds of Arabs bombarded by the anti-Americanism of stations like Al Jazeera. I have personal experience of the frustrations because I am about to celebrate a milestone: my one-year anniversary as the only non-Arab to host a talk show on Arabic satellite television. My weekly show is called *Dakhil Washington* (Inside Washington), and its purpose is to demystify politics and policy-making in our nation's capital for Arab viewers.

Some skepticism about Al Hurra is, of course, understandable. In a *Washington Post* op-ed in April 2003 entitled "Wrong Answer to Al Jazeera," I myself opposed its establishment, arguing that the Middle East did not need yet another state-funded TV station. But after Congress voted overwhelmingly to support the idea, I decided it was important that the effort be pursued as effectively as possible. I believed—and still believe —that the battle of ideas really is a war, with life-and-death consequences.

When Al Hurra first went on the air in early 2004, I was living in Morocco, a front line state in the post-9/11 culture wars. From that vantage point, I could see that Al Hurra should not try to compete with Al Jazeera, which has a lock on the sensationalist, conspiratorial, rabidly anti-American, deeply anti-Semitic share of the Arab viewing market (regrettably, a pretty big share).

Instead, I concluded that Al Hurra should be the home for viewers starved for a free-thinking, progressive, intelligent alternative. It should be television for Arabs who want the unvarnished truth about what is going on in their own countries. And most of all, Al Hurra should be the preferred option for Arabs who want to understand what makes America tick—its politics, government, and society. Those curious, open-minded, eager-to-know Arabs are America's natural allies in the ideological contest against Islamic extremism. Done right, Al Hurra could connect with them—individually, on a daily basis —in a way not possible for any other public diplomacy initiative.

After a rocky start, the station has vastly improved its program content. Although not a disinterested observer, I say this as one of the few Americans who regularly watch Al Hurra, which is not available inside the United States. These days, the network is bolder than it was two years ago, much less risk-averse. Every week, for example, it airs a show called *Equality*, which stars a courageous Saudi woman who travels to Dubai to talk about the aspirations and frustrations of Arab women. For the Israeli elections last March, Al Hurra provided U.S.-style immersion coverage, bringing the mechanics of Israeli democracy to the TV sets of Arab viewers. The network even holds unprecedented town hall meetings in Arab cities during which usually taboo topics are the regular fare.

The A.C. Nielsen statistics show that more than 20 million Arabs watch Al Hurra each week. And the audience should be expanding: Just three months ago, Al Hurra extended its broadcast reach to the millions of Arabic-speakers in Europe. But perhaps the best measure of its progress is that it has gotten the attention of Arab regimes. The Syrian government kicked Al Hurra out of the country after the first of three scheduled town hall meetings, and a number of brave Arab liberals have been arrested after giving provocative interviews to the station. Critics whose views about Al Hurra were formed by the network's problematic early months on the air have a responsibility to give it a second look.

To be sure, Al Hurra has a long way to go. Two areas where it should be leading the pack are local and investigative reporting inside the Middle East and programming that explains America to Arab viewers.

Precisely because Al Hurra is not beholden to any Arab government, it is uniquely positioned to speak truth to power. Solidly reported local stories that expose waste, fraud, and corruption can both empower popular opposition to our adversaries and strengthen the institutions of accountability among our friends. Some of those friendly Arab governments throw towering obstacles in the way of Al Hurra journalists and technicians. Their hostility toward a U.S. satellite station that broadcasts over their heads into the cafés and living rooms of their people should be no surprise.

As for covering America, Al Hurra has a comparative advantage over its competition that it has not yet exploited. For all the poll data about how much Arabs hate America, my own experience is that they actually can't get enough of it. If Al Hurra performs no other service, it should at least be the satellite channel to which Arabs turn when they want to know what the U.S. government and the American people are thinking.

But this turns out to be more difficult than it sounds. The professional community of U.S. Middle East scholars is no help; its members universally dismiss Al Hurra as irrelevant. Most of these people hold remarkably strong opinions about a network few have ever watched. But since most academic Middle East experts believe anything connected to the U.S. government is toxic, their dismissal of Al Hurra is foreordained.

Among key constituencies inside Washington, the situation is little better. Traditional government broadcasters, like the Voice of America, dislike Al Hurra because the upstart took assets and funding from existing operations. The old USIA crowd dislikes Al Hurra because its

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own hard-earned expertise—reaching out to captive nations under the thumb of Communist dictatorships—isn't directly applicable to a station seeking to appeal to viewers in countries whose friendly dictators we don't want to overthrow, but do want to prod toward democracy.

Most damaging of all, many in the State Department strongly disapprove of Al Hurra. Some believe the station unnecessarily complicates relations with Arab capitals. Others are irked because Al Hurra's sizable chunk of funding is controlled by the semi-autonomous Broadcasting Board of Governors, not by Foggy Bottom. Especially dismaying to me, as the host of a show trying to boost Arab understanding of Washington, is the stunning indifference to the success of Al Hurra shown by those people in the Bush administration who should be among its strongest supporters.

From my first week on the air, I have tried to showcase senior officials, so as to build up Al Hurra's brand as the must-watch station to learn what Washington is thinking. Despite many promises, only two senior officials—Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings and White House spokesman Tony Snow—have appeared on my show. More important, only a paltry few have ever appeared on *any* Al Hurra show. Most exasperating is the fact that some senior officials seem to show greater deference to Al Jazeera than they do to taxpayer-funded television that declines to humiliate U.S. spokesmen or roll out the red carpet for disgraced Baathists.

For me personally, this is an irritant, not a show-stopper. There are enough fascinating people and provocative issues in our capital to keep *Dakhil Washington* on the air for a long time even without appearances by high-level government officials. But for the country itself, facing as it does the long-term challenge of confronting ignorance and distortion of America in the Arab world, it seems, to say the least, an opportunity missed. ♦

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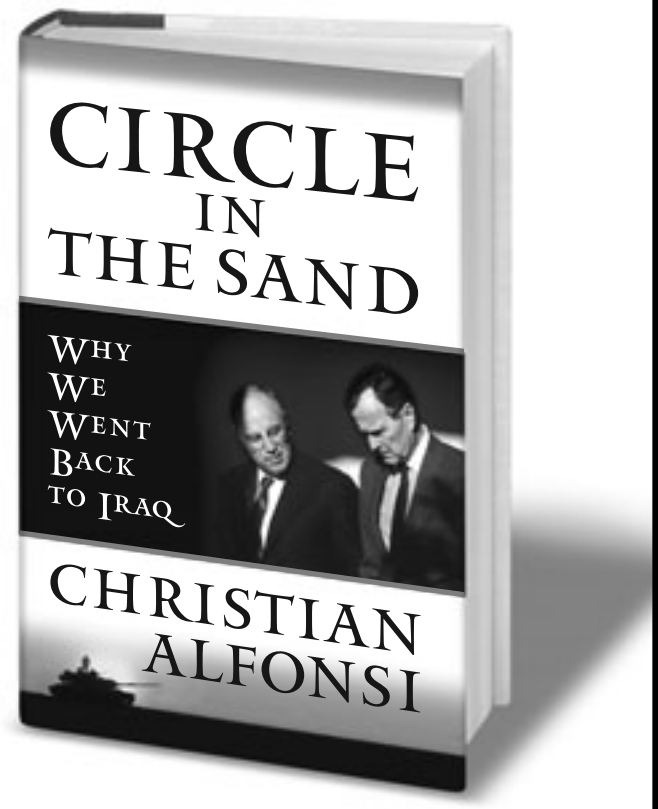
—Bill Moyers



***"Circle in the Sand* goes to the heart of a national tragedy**—how two generations of Bush family mismanagement and inept strategy in Iraq may have doomed early-21st century American policy in the Middle East."

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The Gerrymander That Didn't Work

George W. Bush's congressman is a Democrat, who's fixing to win again. BY BETH HENARY WATSON

Cleburne, Texas

CONGRESSMAN Chet Edwards wasn't supposed to be at this debate, a forum at Cleburne High School that drew more than 200 on a drizzly mid-October Sunday.

Back on former House Majority Leader Tom DeLay's watch in 2003, state Republican lawmakers scripted Edwards's exit from Congress, when they redrew congressional boundaries so as to retire five Democrats from the Texas delegation. In November 2004, four of those Democrats—Charlie Stenholm, Martin Frost, Max Sandlin, and Nick Lampson (now a contender for DeLay's old seat)—fell by decisive margins. Edwards survived.

That year, the GOP and groups like the Club for Growth spent heavily on Edwards's opponent, 10-year Republican state representative Arlene Wohlgemuth, whose state district lay in the northern portion of the newly drawn District 17. But the effort failed: Edwards won reelection 51 percent to 47 percent, a near-copy of his spread against a Republican two years earlier when he represented District 11.

This November, Republican hopes lie in Iraq war veteran Van Taylor, a political neophyte who's playing up his military service, as well as his traditional values, which he says make him more representative of the district than Edwards.

Born to Midland oil money, Taylor no doubt had many options after he graduated from Harvard in 1995. But he enlisted in the Marines, leading a reconnaissance platoon, then working as an intelligence officer. While still in the Marine Reserve, he earned his MBA from Harvard Business School—a degree he shares with Edwards—then took a tour of duty in Iraq. In actions that led to the Navy Commendation Medal with "V" for Valor, Capt. Taylor led a platoon that rescued 31 wounded soldiers under hostile fire and participated in the rescue of POW Jessica Lynch.

Republican hopes lie in Iraq war veteran Van Taylor, a political neophyte who's playing up his military service.

Taylor, who is 34, is 20 years Edwards's junior. He moved into District 17 from Dallas last summer, to the town of West—about 15 miles north of Waco, which Edwards calls home when he's not in Washington—in McLennan County. Taylor operates an investment company, Van-Anne. His other work experience includes brief stints with the real estate giant Trammel Crow and the management consultancy McKinsey & Company.

Edwards relentlessly attacks Taylor for his shallow roots in the 17th, which snakes southeast more than 150 miles from Fort Worth's southern suburbs to Houston's outer reaches.

Even Republican political observers say the outsider label should have been expected. "It's not one of those suburban districts that you can just move into," says Royal Masset, a longtime Republican strategist and former political director of the state GOP. "Waco especially is very insular. They know who the new people are."

Taylor says he feels he's neutralized that criticism by noting Edwards has moved multiple times to run for office.

The Taylor camp insists the strong support for Republicans generally in this stretch of small towns and medium-sized cities means there are potential votes behind most doors they knock on. After all, President Bush, who votes in District 17 at his Prairie Chapel Ranch near Crawford, received nearly 70 percent support in the district in 2004. Vice President Dick Cheney and House Speaker Dennis Hastert have visited Texas to drum up support and local dollars for Taylor.

"People are going to vote their values," Taylor says. "I think some people would say Edwards is out of step." In Cleburne, Taylor harps on what he says are five major philosophical differences between Edwards and himself. One concerns taxes.

"If you want higher taxes, please vote for my opponent," he tells the audience in this working-class community of about 30,000. He calls the abstruse tax code an "inexcusable burden" on businesses.

Edwards has voted against all of Bush's major tax cuts and scores Ds and Fs with the National Taxpayers Union. Necessary components of a good tax cut, according to Edwards, are that it be "fiscally responsible" and "fair to average working families."

In 2005 Edwards and 41 other House Democrats voted for the Death Tax Repeal Permanency Act, a bill that has foundered in the Senate. Edwards has also supported permanently extending the marriage penalty relief in Bush's 2001 tax cuts, and he counts at least 70 times he has voted to cut taxes. He is "very hesitant," though, to pledge to back every tax

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cut, calling it "morally wrong" to saddle future generations with America's $8.5 trillion national debt.

Taylor also boasts of his more conservative stances on cutting government spending, family values, illegal immigration, and Second Amendment rights. Where he runs into PR trouble, as Edwards and supportive editorial boards have noted, is in the details.

Denouncing federal pork in Cleburne, Taylor names common targets of conservative ridicule like the "Salmon-Thirty-Salmon," a 100-foot fish painted on the side of an Alaska Airlines jet paid for with a half-million dollars in federal money, and Alaska's ill-fated "bridge to nowhere."

After the debate, Edwards notes the cuts Taylor mentioned amount to one-thousandth of a percent of the federal budget.

Taylor often claims the "moral authority" to comment on veterans' issues as a Marine, still in the Ready Reserve, but Edwards, too, is well versed in military and veterans' matters. Fort Hood, the largest active duty armored post in the United States, was in his old district, and he maintains a loyal troop of "Vets for Chet." The son of a World War II veteran who attended Texas A&M University, a college in District 17 with strong military ties, Edwards broke into politics working for fellow Aggie (as A&M grads are known) Olin E. "Tiger" Teague, longtime chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Edwards has fought doggedly to shield Waco's V.A. hospital, which employs more than 700, from closure, and he continues to voice support for the Patriot Act. Recently Edwards received the Award of Merit from the Military Coalition, which represents 36 groups, and the "Inspirational Leadership" award from the Military Order of the Purple Heart. The Veterans of Foreign Wars PAC has endorsed him, and his position as ranking member of the House Appropriations Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs Subcommittee clinches his attractiveness as an advocate for the military.

"I don't think voters in our district want to replace that kind of proven leadership with a freshman who's going to be on who knows what committee," says Edwards, who also sits on the budget committee and has a track record of funneling dollars to his district for local projects.

Van Taylor

AP Photo/ D.J . Peters

Edwards also co-chairs the House Army Caucus and the USO Congressional Caucus. "He's pro-military. He's pro-everything. You'd hardly know he was a Democrat until he goes and votes liberal on everything," says strategist Masset, who once ran a congressional campaign against Edwards. "He, almost more than any other Democrat, will do anything to get reelected."

Liberal votes that Edwards's opponent is trying to use against him include his support for San Francisco Democrat Nancy Pelosi for House speaker in 2003 and 2005, although Edwards will not commit publicly for the next speaker's race.

The eight-term incumbent and former state senator also has voted to keep assault weapons illegal, falling afoul of the National Rifle Association. His record has improved in recent years, though. He earned a "B" from the NRA's political arm this election cycle and trumpets the gun group's decision not to fire off an endorsement of his opponent, a change from previous elections.

While GOP operative Masset and veteran political observer Will Lutz, managing editor of the conservative Austin-based political newsletter the *Lone Star Report*, both concede Edwards may look like a prime Republican target on paper, they agree the picture is different from the vantage point of central Texas.

Every mayor in Johnson County, in the northern part of the district—a stronghold for Edwards's rival in 2004—has endorsed Edwards. That plus the fact that the incumbent plays fairly well in the College Station area makes Taylor a man without a "beachhead," as Masset puts it.

Perhaps even worse, the National Republican Congressional Committee reportedly has backed off expected financial support as polls show Edwards comfortably ahead, and election trackers like *Congressional Quarterly* have reclassified the race from "Leans Democratic" to "Democrat Favored."

Lutz notes an initial redistricting plan split the Waco area, which would have made reelection tougher for Edwards, but that map lacked support from key state senators.

"Edwards knows the region well enough," Lutz says. "He knows the politics. Chet Edwards has figured out how to campaign in McLennan County, and as long as it's the center of a congressional district, he's going to be tough to beat."

Yet Lutz offers hope for the GOP. "I think the mandate that Edwards has is a personal mandate, not a policy one," he says. "That seat probably goes Republican if he retires." ♦

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Tangled Webb

Cognitive dissonance in Virginia

By Andrew Ferguson

The culture so dramatically symbolized by the Southern redneck [is] the greatest inhibitor of the plans of the activist Left and the cultural Marxists for a new kind of society altogether.

From the perspective of the activist Left, [rednecks] are the greatest obstacles to what might be called the collectivist taming of America, symbolized by the edicts of political correctness. And for the last fifty years the Left has been doing everything in its power to sue them, legislate against their interests, mock them in the media, isolate them as idiosyncratic, and publicly humiliate their traditions in order to make them, at best, irrelevant to America's future growth.

—from *Born Fighting: How the Scots-Irish Shaped America*, by James Webb (2004)

Yowie. We don't often hear rude talk like that up here in Arlington, Virginia, straight across the river from Washington, D.C. Here the leafy, winding streets are lined with Priuses and Volvos and the bumper stickers say "Visualize World Peace" and "Goddess Power." We especially don't hear such rude talk during Sunday afternoon house parties like the one Pat Langley hosted two weeks ago. Mrs. Langley is a Democratic party activist in this most liberal of suburbs in this most conservative of states. She'd invited friends, fellow activists, and neighbors over for punch and coffee and finger food. She wanted them to watch a campaign video and listen to a conference call over a speaker phone, and then give as much money as they could to her favorite candidate, James Webb.

That's the same James Webb—the staunch defender of the right to bear arms who's warned his countrymen about collectivist taming by the Left, its war on salt-of-the-earth "Joe Sixpack" through such programs as affirmative action, also known (to Webb, among others) as "state-sponsored racism." The same Jim Webb whose war novels bristle with contempt for the professional liberals, mollycoddlers, and antimilitary cultural Marxists who constitute society's decadent elite and who have made their home in the Democratic party ever since their treacherous betrayal of our fighting men in Vietnam.

Something's not right with this picture, obviously, but then so many pictures seem out of whack this election year, and nowhere more so than in Virginia. Here George Allen—former governor, favorite of the conservative movement, and one-term Republican senator of no particular distinction—is being challenged by the most sophisticated right-wing reactionary to run on a Democratic ticket since Grover Cleveland.

It turned out that not many people at Mrs. Langley's knew much about Webb. As committed activists, they were just happy he's a Democrat who's been running even in the polls with Allen and has a fair chance at an upset. And they know he's a Vietnam veteran whose two Purple Hearts, Silver Star, and Navy Cross testify to unimpeachable heroism. Other things they think they know about him, however, aren't quite so.

"He's a war hero, but you know he's refusing to let the campaign reference his war experience," one of Mrs. Langley's neighbors told me. "He refuses to exploit it. That tells you something right there about the kind of man he is." The neighbor didn't flinch when Mrs. Langley played the campaign video, which offered a parade of old combat pictures of Webb and a series of testimonials from his war buddies.

When I asked another neighbor what she thought of Webb's experience working in the Reagan administration—he served as secretary of the Navy late in Reagan's second term—she waved me off.

"He resigned in protest!" she said.

And so he did—but only when Reagan ordered cuts in the military budget that threatened the Reaganite goal of a 600-ship Navy. It's hard for anyone in these days of the Reagan Afterglow to remember that some people, back in the late 1980s, thought Old Ron was going soft.

Dreema Fisk, an Arlington poet and retired schoolteacher, told me she'd heard that Webb had once been a member of the Republican party—a group with which,

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she said, she was tragically familiar. "I come from West Virginia," she said, "and I discovered last time that my entire family back home voted for Bush." She shook her head and kneaded her hands. "I cried all night."

She said she was a Quaker. I asked her whether she'd read any of Webb's war novels. "Are they violent?" she asked. "Maybe I should read one."

Among those Arlingtonians who do know more about Webb, enthusiasm is often muted. As chairman of the County Board a decade ago, Ellen Bozman helped bring about Arlington's continuing era of Democratic dominance. At the party she told me that many of her acquaintances had expressed reservations about her candidate.

"I have friends who say they'll vote for him, but reluctantly," she said. "His service as a Reagan administration official, that bothers some people. And they worry—about other things."

"Like affirmative action?" I said.

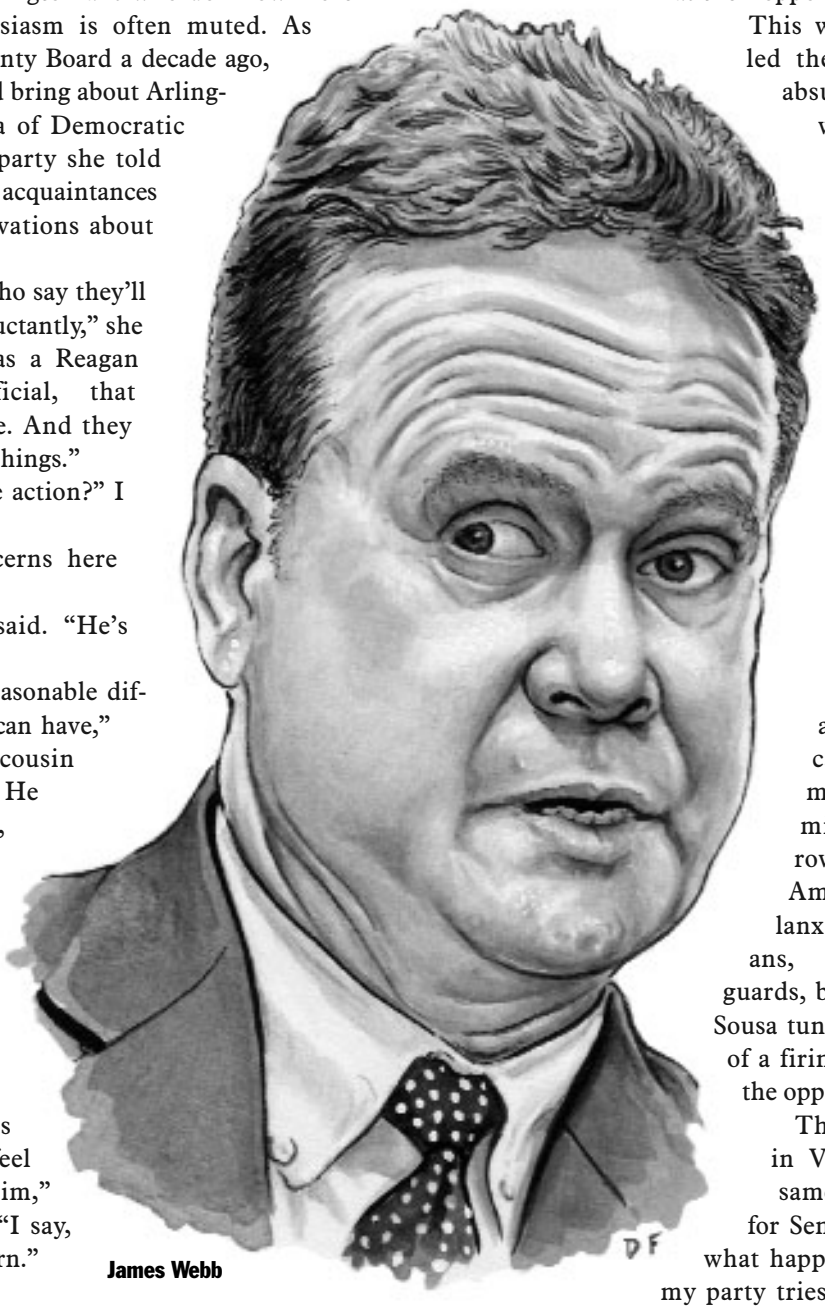
"There are concerns here and there," she said.

"And guns," I said. "He's incredibly pro-gun."

"There can be reasonable differences Democrats can have," she said. "I had a cousin who had guns. He hunted. Of course, that was in rural Illinois."

"And the Confederacy. He really likes the Confederacy. He named his son after Robert E. Lee."

"One friend tells me she just won't feel right voting for him," Mrs. Bozman said. "I say, He'll listen. He'll learn."



James Webb

Illustration by Drew Friedman

What has made Webb acceptable to the Democrats of Arlington, however unevenly, is his furious opposition to the war in Iraq, which he declared early, before there was even a war to oppose, in an op-ed in the *Washington Post* in September 2002. And Webb's opposition to the war is doubly valuable to Democrats because of his bona fides as a warrior. Democrats are so sick of being labeled the peace party—mostly because they are the peace party—that they grow faint at the first flash of a battle ribbon, in hopes of proving they too are just as recklessly bloodthirsty as their opponents.

This warrior romance has led them into numberless absurdities. It explains why, for example, they stuck that Snoopy helmet on poor Michael Dukakis and forced him to ride around in a tank. And it explains the entire national convention of 2004, in which desperate Democrats nominated an undistinguished career politician for no other reason than that he was a decorated war hero and then launched his campaign with ceremonies so martial they might have been borrowed from a Latin American coup: phalanxes of saluting veterans, crisscrossing color guards, brass bands pumping Sousa tunes—everything short of a firing squad to liquidate the opposition.

The embrace of Webb in Virginia has had the same effect. One "Webb for Senate" brochure shows what happens when the Mommy party tries to thump the hairy chest it doesn't have. "Jim Webb has the courage to change Washington," says the headline, over paragraphs that jump with words like "fight" and "threat" and "leadership" and "tough." "Jim understands how to protect our men and women in uniform."

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Hey thanks, Mom! Wait a sec. Aren't *they* supposed to do the protecting?

There's a large difference between Webb and John Kerry, however. A spokesman of Vietnam Veterans Against the War, whose hand Webb refused to shake for 20 years, Kerry is genuinely a man of the left—a centimillionaire of the wind-surfing left, to be sure, but still a man whose every political instinct made him feel right at home in the peace party of George McGovern (another war hero, about whom Webb once said: "I wouldn't have voted for him if you put a gun to my head."). Webb, by contrast, has a long history of right-wingery. He built a career from the revulsion he felt at the left wing's failure to appreciate the Vietnam war or the men who fought it. One of his first public disputes, in 1981, involved his opposition to the minimalist design of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, which he called an insult to veterans.

Webb is what the political taxonomists like to label a blood-and-soil conservative. That point of view appears most plainly in *Born Fighting*, his only popular work of nonfiction. The argument that runs through it is an ingenious act of cultural jujitsu. The book traces the history of Scots-Irish immigrants—the Southern rednecks referred to in the quotation at the beginning of this article—from their violent origins in the old country to their violent arrival in America and on through their violent progress across the Eastern seaboard into the rural South and mid-Atlantic, where they have at last learned to channel their propensity for violence into activities both admirable (the military) and stupid (NASCAR).

Webb's trick is to adapt this history of white folk to the categories of contemporary multiculturalism. He turns liberalism's assumptions of ethnic grievance and victimization to the service of people who, in more conventional accounts, have themselves been seen as the victimizers. Webb rails against "the wielders of cultural power such as Hollywood, academia, and major media [who] chip away at the core principles that have defined the traditions and history of [Scots-Irish] people." And now his people are fighting back. "In a society obsessed with multicultural jealousies, those who cannot articulate their ethnic origins are doomed to a form of social and political isolation. My culture needs to rediscover itself, and in doing so to regain its power to shape the direction of America." Using diversity dogma to put the white man back on top—it is a marvelous inversion.

It also underlies the economic populism that allows Webb to slide edgewise into the mainstream of today's Democratic party. He says he was moved to run for the Senate when he saw "the breakdown in our society along economic lines." He has come to rescue his people—the poor whites who (along with poor blacks) have been the chief victims of globalized turbocapitalism. In every speech he cites the same statistics: "Ten percent of Fortune 500 companies pay zero corporate income taxes," he says. "When I was 24, the average CEO earned 20 times what the average wage-earner did. Today my son is 24, and the average CEO earns 200 times what the average wage-earner does." He is vaguer on the subject of how to fix this unhappy state of affairs. He supports a higher minimum wage and an end to "corporate tax breaks which cost American jobs." At the same time, though, he says he supports a cut in the capital gains tax, in case a redneck wants to sell his stocks.

The vagueness doesn't bother his supporters, because the war is the true rationale for his campaign. And here too he has worked an amazing inversion—one that also could have been predicted from his books, particularly the impressive string of military novels that have made him well known. Webb is not only a gifted novelist but something rarer: a novelist of ideas. And all his ideas are reactionary. Together the books form a long, eloquent protest against the wussification of America, exemplified in the Washington world of slick pols, butt-covering bureaucrats, and the panty-waist, nancy-boy journalists who serve as their stenographers. Webb's complaints about modern politics are much sterner, and much more plausible, than the milk-and-water clichés of "anti-Washington" candidates out in flyover country. Webb hates Washington as only someone who works here can.

"Those monuments that permeated the nation's capital, and the lofty words that washed over the Congress every day, inundating its activities, became in a way artificial. They reminded Doc [a veteran congressman suddenly stirred to idealism] and the others that either the past was false, or the present was a disappointing mockery of what once was greatness."

The decadence of this nation of pussies shows itself most clearly in the relationship between the military and its civilian leadership. Out in the real world, military men "soldier on for the children still at home," knowing that "such a motivation seems medieval in modern America." Soldiers are atavists, grounded in reality, connected by blood to the soil of a place, and the farther one travels from the military life the more unreal America gets. Civilians live in a world of appearances and insincerity and false emotions, "going off to business school or playing Nintendo" while their betters take up arms to save their candy-butts. Politicians in Webb's telling are always "posturing . . . each of them possessed with the type of personality that could slap

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the back and shake the hand of a complete stranger [yuk!]. . . . Touch pat shake smile. The human tools of American politics."

Invariably in Webb's novels the soldiers erupt in frustration against the civilian leaders. "You can figure it out for yourself," says one fed-up military man in *Something to Die For*. "The legislation after World War Two that created the Department of Defense and supposedly ensured civilian control over the military has been a disaster. Do you think I'm kidding? Ask yourself why we won every war before 1947, and we haven't won one since . . . " Webb asks himself the question in nearly every novel, and he has a ready answer: The country is run by people like "Chicken Hawk," the secretary of defense in *Something to Die For*. "They call him Chicken Hawk because he didn't have the guts to serve when there was a war on and now every time there's a crisis he wants to send them in."

Webb makes the same case in arguing against the Iraq war. George W. Bush "has no feel for military culture," Webb says. Instead the president is surrounded by "theorists who have never been on a battlefield, who have never put a uniform on, and who are looking at this thing in a totally different way from people who have had to worry about their troops." Webb seldom misses a chance to point out the military record, or lack of it, of Dick Cheney. If Cheney and the theorists had some military experience, he says, they would never have tried "putting a Judeo-Christian military system in the cradle of Muslim culture." This is Webb's second ingenious bit of jujitsu: By his logic, the war in Iraq isn't an assertion of American power, but another disastrous symptom of a country gone soft, the feckless gesture of a superpower brought low by wusses.

By his logic, the war in Iraq isn't an assertion of American power, but another disastrous symptom of a country gone soft, the feckless gesture of a superpower brought low by wusses.

Both of these inversions—the use of multiculturalism to advance the ethnic interests of white people, and the use of warrior rhetoric to discredit the Bush administration's war—might be extremely valuable to Democrats, if they knew what they were doing.

But that's never a safe bet. Webb's right-wing populism and the liberalism of today's Democratic party make for an abrasive fit, and hints of it showed the other morning at Cecilia's, a Latin restaurant on Columbia Pike, in Arlington. Walter Tejada, Arlington's leading Hispanic politician and the man responsible for making Democrats of the county's growing immigrant population, arranged for Webb to attend a small rally with what Tejada calls "the community."

Webb's views of immigration, like many of his positions on questions of domestic policy, are unformed. It's not hard to imagine where his populism and ethnic allegiance would lead him, though. One thing that all economists agree on—those who favor the present influx of immigrants and those who don't—is that mass immigration lowers the wages of unskilled, uneducated native-born workers; "my people," as Webb calls them. A quick way to raise those wages would be to cut off the future flow of unskilled immigration. Yet this step toward "economic fairness" is not available to a Democratic candidate these days (or to many Republicans either).

In a brief and uncomfortable stump speech, Webb told the Hispanic crowd that he was against a guest-worker program. "We must first define our borders," he said. "And then we must ensure corporate responsibility, because a lot of this is going to come down to the employers."

The crowd seemed puzzled. Later reporters asked Webb to clarify his position. With Tejada next to him, he said he favored some path to legalization and citizenship for the illegals already here. Tejada nodded solemnly. But what about the future? a reporter asked. Would Webb favor tough economic sanctions against businesses that employ illegals, as a way of drying up the tide of immigrants?

"Yes," Webb said, "there needs to be corporate enforcement. We've had no corporate enforcement for six years! There's got to be employer sanctions, otherwise you're going to keep wages down. We have got to get a handle on this."

Tejada glanced at the ceiling. Punishing employers who hire illegals is not, needless to say, part of the game plan for the community, or for Arlington Democrats.

After Webb was gone, I asked Tejada about this. "Does Webb really want to punish employers who hire members of the community?"

"The devil is in the details," Tejada said. "Jim is a very complex thinker. We as a country need to have a long debate about these things."

"But wouldn't punishing employers reduce the opportunities for workers coming across the border?" I said.

"We will continue to work with Jim on this," Tejada said. "We will consult with him, advise him going forward. Educate him." ♦

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The Blowout Belt

The most vulnerable Republicans are found in a five-state swath, from Indiana to Connecticut

By Fred Barnes

Evansville, Indiana

Republican congressman John Hostettler is standing, a bit stiffly, in front of the federal building in Evansville. The midterm congressional election is two weeks off, and this is his lone public event of the day. Beside the portable podium is a blowup of the obituary page of the *Evansville Courier & Press* from nine days earlier. All the stories are blotted out but one—a short piece, little more than a squib, about Hostettler's receiving the Homeland Defender Award from a group called 9/11 Families for a Secure America. Hostettler is upset.

Running the story on the obit page was a "callous indignity" to the families of 9/11 victims, he says. That placement was painful to "grieving families," "insulting," and, worse still, "insensitive to the people of the nation." Hostettler says the newspaper should apologize. But "to date the response has been I could write a letter about how important the award was."

It was a peculiar event, even for Hostettler. He is a campaign oddity. He has the distinction of being regarded as the most endangered House member in the most treacherous strip of the country for Republicans in the November 7 election. Yet he's pursuing reelection as if the political environment were unchanged from his five earlier reelection battles when Democrats confidently targeted him for defeat and wound up frustrated.

He's raised little money and is likely to be outspent by his Democratic opponent, Evansville sheriff Brad Ellsworth, by roughly 3 to 1. Hostettler has never hired outsiders to do polling, develop a campaign strategy, or create TV ads—nor has he this year. His sister, Karen Hammonds, is his campaign manager. And though President Bush won 62 percent in Hostettler's district in 2004 and remains relatively popular here, the congressman has spurned a Bush visit.

Hostettler's on-my-own approach may prove foolhardy this time around. His district sits within a five-state stretch of territory—from Connecticut, through New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and ending with Indiana—that Republican pollsters and Democratic consultants alike expect to be the most fertile ground for Democrats to pick off Republican House incumbents. For Republicans, it's a potential blowout belt. Democrats could gain enough seats in these five states alone to make their takeover of the House of Representatives a certainty.

A quite attainable goal is 10 pickups. If Democrats manage this, all they will need to take control of the House is to win five open seats held by Republicans. Five open seats where Democrats are leading are Mark Foley's in Florida, Jim Nussle's in Iowa, Tom DeLay's in Texas, the Arizona seat along the Mexican border, and a Colorado seat in the Denver suburbs.

Of course, nothing is ever assured in politics. And the blowout belt is a 5-10-15 matter. If Republicans close the campaign with a strong finishing kick, they could limit their losses in the five states to 5 seats. More likely, they will merely blunt Democratic momentum in the closing days, limiting Democrats to a pickup of 10 seats. But should Democrats actually generate the "wave" that the media are breathlessly hoping for, the Republican death toll will rise to 15 (or more) in the blowout belt.

All the reasons behind the anti-Republican mood nationwide also apply in the blowout belt. The war in Iraq is unpopular. The president has lost support, as evidenced by his low job approval. The economy, strong as it is, hasn't produced a feeling of prosperity. And there's the six-year itch, the inclination of voters after a half-dozen years of a presidency to turn against the party in the White House. It afflicted even the great presidents: Franklin Delano Roosevelt (loss of 72 House seats in 1938), Dwight Eisenhower (loss of 13 Senate and 48 House seats in 1958), and Ronald Reagan (loss of Senate control in 1986).

But the blowout states are also special cases, making Republican prospects even bleaker. In New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, the Republican party is collapsing at the state office level. George Pataki, retiring as New York governor after 12 years, leaves behind a shrinking

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state party bereft of competitive statewide candidates. In Pennsylvania, Republicans picked an untested, ex-professional football player, Lynn Swann, to run for governor, with predictably negative results. Republicans hoped a liberal third-party candidate would siphon off Democratic votes and allow Senator Rick Santorum to win a third term with less than 50 percent of the vote. But the Green party candidate was ruled off the ballot.

Scandals have ripped apart Ohio Republicans. Governor Bob Taft pleaded guilty to failing to disclose a gift, an innocuous but highly publicized misdemeanor. His approval rating has dipped below 20 percent. Congressman Bob Ney pleaded guilty to accepting favors from lobbyist Jack Abramoff. The state lost approximately $10 to $12 million invested in rare coins through a prominent Republican coin dealer. Worst of all, Ohio lost more than 210,000 manufacturing jobs between 2000 and 2005, and its unemployment rate is a full percentage point above the national average. Since Republicans hold all statewide offices, they're getting the blame. Besides, they've allowed the Ohio tax burden to become the third heaviest in the nation.

In Indiana, Republican governor Mitch Daniels has taken two bold and probably necessary steps that have backfired politically. One was to impose daylight saving time throughout the state, which previously operated under a mixed bag of time standards. The other was to privatize the Indiana Toll Road, leasing it to a Spanish-Australian joint venture for $3.8 billion. Daniels, who's not up for reelection until 2008, became a drag on the Indiana Republicans running this year.

Grover Norquist, the conservative Washington operative, has a compelling theory about declining Republican prospects in the blowout belt. Those states have been dominated by "Lincoln Republicans," he says. The party created in Northern states by Abraham Lincoln believed in fighting slavery and preserving the Union. Once those goals were achieved, it had no ideology, no set of firm beliefs. It became an establishment party, thriving on power and patronage. In a bad Republican year like 2006, such a party has little pull with average voters, Norquist says.

He contrasts Lincoln Republicans with Reagan Republicans in southern, prairie, and western states. The Republican party that grew up in those states in recent decades was based on conservative beliefs. And this ideology holds Reagan Republicans together in good years and bad, Norquist says. Indeed, Democrats have mounted few serious challenges this year in the South, where Reagan Republicans are strongest.

A related factor is the emergence of a Republican voting bloc of religious conservatives who make up more than 40 percent of the party's electorate. They are now the most reliable Republican voters. But while they are a powerful force among Republicans in the South, prairie, and West, they are in short supply in the North. This is still another reason for the disproportionate number of vulnerable Republicans in the Connecticut-to-Indiana belt.

Let's look at the five states: ***Connecticut.** This was initially seen as a likely graveyard for Republican moderates, specifically House members Chris Shays, Nancy Johnson, and Rob Simmons. All three are vulnerable in a state with a weakening Republican party. But when threatened, moderates can be mean. All three turned out to be tough campaigners. When Shays's Democratic foe, Diane Farrell, brought in Massachusetts senator Teddy Kennedy, Shays raised Chappaquiddick: At least House Speaker Denny Hastert, blamed for tolerating Foley's flirtation with Capitol pages, hadn't plunged his car into the water and left a dead woman behind. Shays, like Senator Joe Lieberman, has bravely stuck to his pro-Iraq war position (with modifications). Johnson aired a TV ad zinging her opponent, Chris Murphy, for insisting that NSA eavesdropping on phone calls by suspected terrorists should be done only under a judge's order. "Liberal Chris Murphy says: 'No, apply for a court order even if valuable time is lost.' Chris Murphy—wrong on security, wrong for America.'" Simmons is given the best chance of winning, Johnson second, Shays third. If only one of them loses, that will be a victory for Republicans. Lieberman, running as an independent, is a strong favorite for reelection. The Republican Senate candidate, Alan Schlesinger, will be lucky to get 10 percent of the vote.

* **New York.** What can be said to sugarcoat the status of a party that will lose the three top statewide races by lopsided margins and as many as four House seats? Not much. Republican embarrassment will be greater still if Eliot Spitzer is elected governor and Hillary Clinton reelected to the Senate with more than 70 percent of the vote. It's possible, raising a legitimate fear that the rout at the top of the ticket will lead to blowouts in the House races. The national media have done their part to promote Democrats. A Democratic candidate, Michael Arcuri, for an open Republican seat got a boost from the *Washington Post*, which put him among "an uncommonly high number of good looking [Democratic candidates]." Arcuri's friends "tease him about his fashion-magazine persona." Another Democratic candidate, Eric Massa, was featured in an adoring piece in *Money*

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magazine about the financial sacrifice he and his family have made for the sake of his candidacy. Both Arcuri and Massa are slight favorites.

In a deal with Democrats, House seats in upstate New York were gerrymandered to give Republicans an edge. But the Republican advantage in registered voters is misleading. To use Norquist's term, those voters are Lincoln Republicans, unreliable in a pinch. Even supposedly entrenched Republicans like Tom Reynolds, who heads the House Republican Campaign Committee, are vulnerable. The Foley affair, in which Reynolds played a minimal role, jolted his campaign: One poll showed him 15 percentage points down. His opponent is an eccentric ex-Republican businessman named Jack Davis. He switched parties after being silenced at an upstate appearance by Vice President Cheney, during which he had been complaining noisily about the Bush administration's free trade policy. Aided by a heavy dose of TV ads, Reynolds has recovered from the Foley setback, but his reelection remains in doubt. If Republicans lose only a single House seat in New York, which is still possible, they will be ecstatic.

* **Pennsylvania.** Bush's reelection campaign made a Herculean effort to win Pennsylvania in 2004, but John Kerry took the state 51 to 48 percent. And that was when the political environment was favorable to Republicans. Now it's not. Republican House member Don Sherwood is in trouble because of an affair with a woman who says he choked her. A visit to his district by Bush probably wasn't enough to save him. Just as vulnerable is Republican Curt Weldon, whose home was recently raided in a federal investigation of his role, if any, in steering contracts to his daughter. Two Republican congressmen in the ever-more-liberal suburbs of Philadelphia, Jim Gerlach and Mike Fitzpatrick, have waged impressive campaigns but could lose. Republicans are strong in the state legislature, but the truth is that Pennsylvania is basically a Democratic state and becoming more so. A loss of two House seats is probably the best Republicans can do.

* **Ohio.** Tom Reynolds, as House Republican campaign chief, looked at Ohio last summer and called it "ground zero." It's the only state where a weak economy trumps the war in Iraq as the worst issue for Republicans, who have had other problems here besides. The Republican candidate to replace Ney, state senator Joy Padgett, filed for personal bankruptcy after her and her husband's personal and business financial records were seized. If she wins, her congressional salary might be tapped to pay off debts. And just last week, the chief of staff to Governor Bob Taft attacked Ken Blackwell, who's running to succeed Taft, in a letter to the editor in the *Wall Street Journal*. (Both are Republicans.) "There can be no doubt that the current political climate in Ohio is poisonous for Republicans," the letter said. "But to suggest that Ken Blackwell, Ohio's secretary of state, is a helpless victim burdened only by his [Republican] brothers and sisters is absurd." Blackwell trails Democratic gubernatorial candidate Ted Strickland by a mile.

While the mainstream media have huffed and puffed about nasty Republican campaign ads, they've ignored the cheap shot taken at Deborah Pryce, a member of the House Republican leadership. "Deborah Pryce's friend Mark Foley is caught using his position to take advantage of 16-year-old pages," an announcer says in ads placed on Christian radio touting Democrat Mary Jo Kilroy. The suggestion is that Pryce knowingly tolerated Foley's misconduct, an implication for which there is no evidence. Nonetheless, Pryce is threatened with losing her Columbus-based seat. Again, a loss of only one seat in Ohio would please Republicans.

* **Indiana.** The myth about Indiana is that it's a Republican state with solidly Republican House seats. Actually Indiana is unfailingly Republican only in presidential contests. Three House Republicans are now in jeopardy, each of them in a classic swing district. Chris Chocola's seat in South Bend was Republican in the Reaganite 1980s and Democratic in the Clintonian 1990s. With neither party dominant in 2006, Chocola faces a tough fight to win a new House term. So does freshman Republican Mike Sodrel in southern Indiana. Sodrel was once viewed as the most vulnerable House Republican in the nation, but he's run an effective campaign against the Democratic incumbent he beat in 2004, Baron Hill.

That leaves Hostettler as Mr. Vulnerable. His opponent, Brad Ellsworth, is one of the least liberal Democratic House candidates this year. He's pro-life, pro-gun, and pro-Marriage Protection Amendment. And he's signed a pledge not to vote for any tax increase. But Ellsworth isn't as far ahead—23 percentage points—as a college-conducted poll suggested. A rule of thumb in politics is that all college polls should be disregarded.

Hostettler has been behind before. In fact, he usually trails in opinion polls and then wins. His supporters seem to be out of the reach of pollsters. Yet they show up as volunteers on Election Day and turn out a larger-than-expected Hostettler vote. So it would be a surprise but not a total shock if Hostettler eked out another victory. Should he pull this off in a political climate as bad as today's is for Republicans, it would signal that the Democratic dream of sweeping Republicans out of dozens of House seats is not to be. Stranger things have happened in politics. ♦

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Down for the Count?

The misbegotten curriculum known as Reform Math is a failure that may finally be on the way out.

By Melana Zyla Vickers

It's been a bad autumn for public school leaders in the state of Washington, a battleground in the nation's reemergent math wars. First, a whopping 52 percent of seventh graders and 41 percent of fourth graders failed the statewide math test. That dismal news further energized a new parents' group already lobbying to ditch the state's Reform Math curriculum, which favors estimation and kid-invented solutions to problems and downplays basics like long division and multiplication tables. Worst of all from the point of view of the public education establishment, the original champion of Reform Math—the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics—did an about-face in September and called for a nationwide return to basics.

By the beginning of October, Washington's besieged school administrators were circling the wagons: The state superintendent of public instruction announced she stood by the existing standards. One of their principal architects, math-education expert Virginia Warfield, compared the call for change to book burning. Criticism of the way math is taught in the state is a "smear and sneer campaign," Warfield added in an email newsletter on October 8. And she warned Washingtonians that Stanford mathematician James Milgram, one of the leaders of the return-to-basics movement, is "Rush Limbaugh with a Ph.D."

The fight will move to the legislature in January, when dueling math bills are due to be introduced. But whatever the outcome of that local controversy, its existence is indicative of a renewed struggle over math teaching coast to coast.

There's little dispute about the underlying predicament: U.S. public schools—rich ones, poor ones—have been failing math for decades. It was way back in 1965 that a musical spoof blasted the then-popular New Math, forebear of today's Reform Math, as "so very simple that only a child can do it." Eleven years ago, American eighth graders were revealed to be near the bottom of the international mathematics heap, just above their peers in Iran and Cyprus. And since at least 1990, the proportion of middle-class American high school sophomores proficient at "low level mathematical concepts, such as simplifying an algebraic expression," has languished around 45 percent.

The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics has been leading this downhill march. After the federal government sounded the alarm with the report *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, which warned of a "rising tide of mediocrity" in the schools, the NCTM developed a plan to put things right. In 1989 it published *Curriculum and Evaluation Standards for School Mathematics*, a 258-page document that would define the prevailing wisdom for a generation.

Drills and memorization, it said, were the problem with American math teaching. Where once the student was required to master skills as prescribed by the teacher, under the new regime the student "discovers or creates math knowledge." Some math problems "should be open-ended with no right answer," and for "complex calculations" such as "column addition, long division," a "calculator should be used." *Standards* advocated communicating math in words and pictures while deemphasizing basic algorithms. This would make math more accessible, the argument ran, not just improving students' math performance, but ultimately "creating a just society in which women and various ethnic groups enjoy equal opportunities and equitable treatment."

Standards was quickly criticized by traditionalists such as Caleb Nelson in the *American Spectator*. But state departments of education and school districts already gripped by the "constructivist" fad ("A conceptual approach enables children to acquire clear and stable concepts by constructing meanings in the context of physical situations and allows mathematical abstractions to emerge

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from empirical experience."—*Standards*, p. 17) lapped it up. New texts, supported by over $50 million from the National Science Foundation, swept the country: *Investigations in Number, Data and Space* by the math program developer TERC and distributed by Pearson Scott Foresman; *MathScape*, by the Education Development Center and published by Glencoe/McGraw-Hill; and *Everyday Mathematics*, by the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project and published by Wright Group/McGraw-Hill. By 2005 half the states were no longer requiring children to master the multiplication tables.

The effects of the Reform Math cure were worse than the poor-performance disease. Where in 1990 some 33 percent of college-bound sophomores had been proficient at "multi-step solutions . . . such as drawing an inference based on an algebraic expression," by 2002 the figure had dropped to 28 percent. Sophomores in "general" high school programs had similarly regressed. The reforms didn't even advance the fashionable goal of attracting girls to math: There were fewer women studying college math in 2004 than in 1989 when the Reform Math standards were published. Fewer men, too.

Reform Math, while not the sole cause of American students' poor performance, bears much of the blame. Says University of Rochester mathematician Ralph Raimi, "A student could take essentially no mathematics at all except for the bare bones of arithmetic until the 9th grade and be better off than today's kids who have reform programs."

So this September, when the NCTM reversed course and published *Curriculum Focal Points*, calling for a return to basics, the move was heartily welcomed in certain quarters. The 41-page document "makes no bones about the fact that algorithms (such as long division and the concept of borrowing in subtraction) should be taught," says Harvard mathematician Wilfried Schmid, a critic of Reform Math and a member of a new math-education panel appointed by President Bush. *Curriculum Focal Points* argues for the kinds of practices in use in the countries where children score high on international math tests, such as Singapore and Japan.

Other members of the president's National Mathematics Advisory Panel have also praised the NCTM's new approach—opening the possibility that the national experts might be on the same page as the teachers' group when the panel issues its draft report in February.

If only. Alas, the leadership of the NCTM has already begun to backpedal. *Focal Points*, says NCTM president Francis "Skip" Fennell, "is not a new version of the *Standards*." It is not a back-to-basics document, Virginia Warfield, a consultant on *Focal Points*, told a think tank in Washington. NCTM executives wrote letters of protest to newspapers whose coverage portrayed the document as a new departure.

The mixed signals coming from the NCTM may reflect the fact that many of the council's members are teachers with degrees in education, not math; many of them have been committed to Reform Math for decades, and oppose change. Fennell says that among the group's 100,000 members, it's possible "there are some people who would be concerned about us moving in this direction." Maybe he needs to sound ambivalent to appease them.

But this equivocation robs the NCTM's recommendations of much-needed momentum. Already responsible for the ground lost over the last 15 years, the council may now contribute to national paralysis.

To learn what paralysis looks like, consider New York City. In 2002, facing heavy pressure from parents, the city launched a review of its Reform Math programs (such as TERC's *Investigations)*, under which 43 percent of the city's students were performing below grade level. But with NCTM and an army of education experts still solidly behind Reform Math, the back-to-basics parents, armed only with their children's experience and a few studies, were outgunned. The city did step back from the brink, but only just.

New York selected a new program called *Everyday Mathematics*. This is "the least objectionable among the reform programs," explains Harvard's Schmid. "They do have a discussion of algorithms, but not one that is designed to get children proficient" speedily and without distractions. That's because the program describes several alternative ways to solve a problem, such as ancient Egyptian multiplication, rather than teaching one method. It downplays mastery of long division, and puts calculators in the hands of kindergartners. *Everyday Mathematics* is used by over two million children across the country—including many in Fairfax County, Virginia, near Washington, D.C., where a parents' movement failed to secure the adoption of the back-to-basics textbook *Saxon Math* a few years ago.

It's easy to see why grassroots movements founder. Parents don't always want to stick their necks out while their kids are in school, for fear of stigmatizing their children. And the forces aligned against change—administrators, education consultants—are powerful, entrenched, and wealthy.

Yet without real change, children will continue to be caught in the middle, striving all day to master material their parents consider unsuitable, then getting extra help with the basics at home at night. In the state of Washington, the private tutoring business has grown steadily since the implementation of Reform Math in 1993. In Brook-

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line, Massachusetts, which has used Reform Math programs *Innovations* and *MathScape*, 26 percent of students aged five to ten get outside tutoring, according to a school-system report.

Teachers can be caught in the middle as well. Elizabeth Carson, executive director of NYC HOLD, the city's main back-to-basics group, says she's heard plenty of accounts of teachers closing the door and teaching the basics—instead of the Reform Math that is part of the official curriculum—out of earshot of their administrators. And the Brookline report shows that most elementary school teachers saddled with Reform Math programs think the programs focus too little on computation and traditional algorithms.

The trouble is, "all this talking is going on while our children right now are losing their educations. We don't have ten years, we don't have two years," says Carson, who places blame for the lost years squarely on the NCTM. She's disappointed with the group's retreat from its back-to-basics document: "Either they understand what's wrong with the course they've led us on, or they don't."

Most teachers saddled with Reform Math programs think the programs focus too little on computation and traditional algorithms.

The picture isn't all grim. Parents are reaching for their own solutions, teaching drill-and-basics-heavy *Singapore Math*, *Saxon Math*, and *Sadlier-Oxford Progress in Mathematics* after hours and trading the books on eBay. Some schools and school systems in Massachusetts, Georgia, and Maryland have returned to the basics, adopting *Singapore Math* and *Saxon Math* and achieving positive results on their state tests. Perhaps most important, mighty California pioneered a return to the basics with a revision of its math standards starting in 1997, and has tightened its list of approved textbooks in recent years, a victory for parents' groups there.

To be sure, the California standards contain opt-out provisions; yet the state is moving forward. So are Indiana and, to a lesser degree, Massachusetts. If Washington now joins these three, and Utah, North Carolina, and Florida—all soon to revise their standards—follow, the back-to-basics approach could be sufficiently prevalent to influence the publishers of math textbooks. States typically revise their standards once a decade. Market-driven, the publishers are guided by the standards of the most populous states.

Which is why national momentum is so important. If the NCTM promotes its changes aggressively—and if the National Mathematics Advisory Panel proposes changes along similar lines, and these influence states through the No Child Left Behind reauthorization in 2007, as well as through National Science Foundation and National Research Council funding of math-education projects—then the math curricula in the public schools may well improve.

Of course, misguided standards are only one piece of the poor-performance puzzle. Another, possibly larger, problem in math education is the fact that most teachers have a weak educational background in math, as Sandra Stotsky, another member of the national math panel, stressed. A new study from the Education Schools Project shows that only 28 percent of applicants to the education program of a typical public university pass the math portion of their application test the first time they take it. Moreover, only 41 percent of principals surveyed nationally say education graduates are "very well" or "moderately well" prepared to implement state curriculum standards. But fixing teacher education—for instance, requiring teachers to have a degree in their substantive field first, and a specialization in education second—takes a generation. It's also expensive.

Meanwhile, the consequences of the public schools' failure to teach math to a high standard are far-reaching. In 2000, 16 percent of university freshmen took remedial classes in mathematics. For community-college freshmen, the figure was 35 percent. Universities are filling the math gap with better-schooled foreigners: Over half the Ph.D.s in math and engineering, and almost half of master's degrees in computer science, awarded by American institutions are being earned by foreigners, and the foreign population in undergraduate math, engineering, and computer science departments is growing as well. In the broader economy, business groups complain that their employees' math skills are weak. High-tech companies in particular decry the shortage of qualified American job-seekers.

A new direction is essential. Francis Fennell of the NCTM says his group has shipped out 300,000 copies of *Focal Points* since its release early this fall. That's a start. What's needed now is a clear renunciation of Reform Math, along with all the faddish clutter that still distracts students and teachers in the classroom, and a firm endorsement of the basics—memorization of the multiplication tables and mastery of long division, fractions, and algebra. Fortified by an unambiguous message from the NCTM, the National Mathematics Advisory Panel and the 50 states could conceivably reshape the teaching of math—so as to add to the skills and life chances of American schoolchildren instead of subtracting from them. ♦

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Bettmann / Corbis

Berlin, November 17, 1938

Turning Point

The German rehearsal for genocide BY FRED BAUMANN

For fading or youthful memories, Kristallnacht, so named cheerfully by the Nazis in honor of all the glass they broke, was the night of November 9, 1938, when Hitler and Goebbels unleashed Nazi gangs, mostly the SA but with some SS participation, on the Jews of Germany, under the guise of "spontaneous" revenge for the murder of a German diplomat in Paris by a Jew.

Synagogues were burned all over the Reich, Jewish shops were broken into, looted and burned, Jews were beaten, subjected to public humiliation, tortured, sent to concentration camps and, in some cases, murdered. While things had been bad enough already, with Jews legally segregated and stigmatized, and everywhere the legitimate target for playful Nazis, and while persecution was to climax in a then-unthinkable genocide, that night marked a decisive turning point, both for the Germans and the Jews. From then on, all but the blindest German and Austrian Jews knew they had to get out. The regime had both revealed and consolidated its murderous intentions by what was, in part, a symbolic act foreshadowing extermination.

Kristallnacht
Prelude to Destruction
by Martin Gilbert
HarperCollins, 320 pp., $21.95

Sir Martin Gilbert, best known as the leading biographer of Winston Churchill, but an extraordinarily prolific historian on Jewish topics as well as 20th century history, has contributed a book on the subject to the *Making History* series, which features events that make "a lasting impact on the unfolding course of history." Kristallnacht was such an event, and known to be so from the time the sun came up the next day. To demonstrate this, however, requires Gilbert to tell two, in some ways quite separate, stories, which are linked by the experiences of the victims. The first is what happened on Kristallnacht, told for the most part from the viewpoint of Jewish survivors. The second is the desperate rush to the closing exits that continued, feebly, even after the war started in September 1939.

There is a difficulty that faces anyone who tackles this subject today. What horrified the civilized world (as Gilbert shows by his effective citations of British and American observers) was so overshadowed in retrospect by

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the dimensions of what we call the Holocaust that it may be hard for jaded readers to respond appropriately to violence that, after all, "only" involved less than a hundred deaths. Gilbert solves it by heaping eyewitness accounts upon each other, with the apparent artlessness of a mere chronicler. But what is at first a wild array of particulars, from hairbreadth escapes and the occasional principled and courageous German—such as the aristocratic district official Wichard von Bredow who, armed with a revolver, single-handedly drove off the SA gangs that had come to burn the local synagogue—to arrests, burnings, and beatings, begins to show comprehensible patterns, all the while involving the reader in the desperation and fear of the victims.

Here we see the details: The sinister politeness of the Gestapo, the meanness of property-grabbing neighbors, the broken feather bedding of one store soaking out on the street in the broken wine bottles of its neighbor.

Here, too, is the striking scene from Dresden, described by a local painter, at the burning of the Semper synagogue, where the Nazis dragged out some Jewish teachers, "forced crumpled top hats onto their heads and exhibited them to the baying crowd," where "a well-dressed, grey-haired passerby" called out "Incredible, this is like the worst times of the Middle Ages!" only to be arrested. This is where the golden Star of David that crowned the synagogue was safe guarden by a German firefighter, who hid it until the end of the war. This is also where, when a few days later the remains of the synagogue were dynamited in the presence of a documentary film crew, "a local character" told the painter, "This fire will return! It will make a long curve and then come back to us." (Uncharacteristically, Gilbert comments that "the fire was to come to Dresden six years and three months later.")

We even get a few petty victories of the humiliated, such as the boy who, set to cleaning public toilets with a rag, managed to convince his captor that he didn't know how, and got the pedantic Nazi to clean two urinals himself, just to teach him the right way to do it.

Here, as in much of his writing, Gilbert does little overt interpreting. He can, therefore, sometimes seem a bit superficial. But in this he follows in the footsteps of Thucydides, who does his interpretation, as his translator Thomas Hobbes pointed out, by the ordering and selection of his facts, only rarely by his own comments. For instance, in telling the emigration story, Gilbert frequently emphasizes the attainments and excellences of many of the refugees. So when later, deadpan, he recounts how a scheme to send thousands of Jews to Alaska fell before the anxious objections of the chambers of commerce of Anchorage and Juneau, we don't need commentary; we reflect on the implications ourselves. True, the basic story of Kristallnacht is one of evil unleashed on innocence. But there are plenty of shades of gray to think about in the choices of the many interested observers, from the watching crowds to the watching nations.

Still, telling the story through the eyes of the victims has some drawbacks. Thus, when drawing lessons, Gilbert's first is "that a whole nation can be turned totally and obscenely against a decent, hard-working, creative, loyal and integral part of its own society." But to what extent was Kristallnacht the final catalyst to complete that process, and to what extent was it an expression of its completion? Gilbert reports that in the small town of Marktbreit-am-Main, the Nazis who showed up with a list of Jewish houses were strangers; presumably, the local Nazis weren't trustworthy. My mother, who was in Hamburg during Kristallnacht, always said that the Nazi leadership there didn't trust its own SA and had sent in thugs from Schleswig-Holstein. Was this true, or just a comforting illusion of the Hamburg Jews? Gilbert does not go into it; his story is not told from the Nazi viewpoint. Yet it would be worthwhile to know how sure of their own the Nazis were, or how much Kristallnacht was meant to create among Germans a *fait accompli* from which there could be no going back.

Again, Gilbert gives us many relevant details. We see the fire departments that tried to help and those that stood idly by, the police that only partly or wholly forfeited their responsibilities, the crowds of onlookers that variously cheered and participated, or stood by with (in the words of a British diplomatic observer) "the inane grin which often inadvertently betrays the guilty conscience," or that, occasionally, watched glumly. We see the sadists given leave to indulge themselves and, in one case, the party members who twice refused to arrest their Jewish pal. But more evidence, on a larger scale, would have helped.

The second story, of the race to emigrate in the face of a largely indifferent, if not hostile, world, has been told before, but Gilbert does it powerfully. The usual villains are there, e.g., the State Department official Breckinridge Long, instructing embassy officials "to put every obstacle in the way and to . . . resort to various administrative devices which would postpone and postpone and postpone the granting of the visas" and Secretary of State Cordell Hull himself, who ably performed the same service at the policy level (for example, urging the Haitian government not to take in any more refugees).

Then there was the British official Patrick Reilly who wrote of Jewish refugees from Nazi-occupied Bohemia and Moravia to Poland, who now wanted to get to England: "A great many of these . . . are not in any sense political refugees, but Jews who panicked unnecessarily and need not have left."

But there are heroes who are not as well known as they should be, particularly the British captain Frank Foley, the Chinese diplomat Feng Shan Ho (a Christian), the Swiss police commander Paul Grüninger, and the Portuguese consul general in Bordeaux, Aristides de Sousa Mendes, all of whom bent and even broke the rules of their own governments just to save as many Jews as possible. Britain comes off particularly well in this account,

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and is justly praised for the famous evacuation of children, the *Kindertransports*. (I myself have reason to thank it for its attempt to solve the servant problem by giving refuge to young German Jewish women who would work as domestics, among them my mother.)

Britain's craven immigration policy for Palestine is not, however, neglected. As for us, Gilbert emphasizes both the large total of eventual Jewish immigration to the United States and the unwillingness of top leadership, especially President Roosevelt, to overcome the short-range and local obstacles put up most memorably by those wretched Alaskan chambers of commerce. (Speaking of northern climes, the Canadians, especially the Québécois, come off quite badly.) While it is not one of the lessons Gilbert draws from his own account, what comes through most powerfully to me is the overwhelming human tendency not to inconvenience oneself in the slightest, even by changing everyday bureaucratic rules, in the face of someone else's tragedy, and the accompanying capacity to rationalize indifference.

All those today, especially Jews of a progressive bent who, like the scholar Tony Judt, think that the disappearance of the Jewish state would mean a net increase in human progress, urgently need to reflect on this example. Would a humane world today offer refuge to millions of Israeli Jews fleeing a "binational" Hamas-run state? Want to count on it?

It is hard to know what kind of a reception a book like this will get today among its intellectual target audience. All around us we see, among progressives, unmistakable signs of Holocaust fatigue, even of irritation with the most impeccable historical reminders. Following Norman Finklestein, many express indignation about the Holocaust "industry" and display suspicion that all talk about it is just meant to justify Israeli "imperialism."

Sir Martin Gilbert, however, is a true historian, and his real purpose is to record what can still be recorded. After the political lessons are drawn—the human costs of vengeful hatred on the one hand and feckless incomprehension and dawdling on the other, the need to recognize the former and take steps to deal with it early enough, and the enormous difficulties that arise in meeting that need—what remains most powerfully in memory is Gilbert's testament to those heroic and decent people, Jews and Gentiles, who may have been overpowered but were not overwhelmed, like the pianist and conductor Leopold Birkenfeld, who organized an orchestra in the Lodz ghetto that played Schubert, Beethoven, and Mendelssohn to raise the spirits of their downtrodden audiences, or the 3,000 non-Jewish women, married to Jews, who demonstrated for a week in front of the building where their husbands were being held before deportation to Auschwitz.

Miraculously, Goebbels backed down and their husbands survived the war. Sometimes, courage does make a difference. ♦

Siege Mentalities

Lessons learned from the classical way of war.

BY DENNIS SHOWALTER

Soldiers & Ghosts
A History of Battle in Classical Antiquity
by J.E. Lendon
Yale, 480 pp., $35

This controversial study, well researched and well reasoned, invites comparison with the works of Victor Davis Hanson, Josh Ober, and Adrian Goldsworthy because of the fundamental questions it raises about the nature of ancient war. Lendon calls this a history of methods of fighting on land in the classical era, from the Age of Homer through the 4th century B.C. It is, however, a book about "why" rather than "what," "when," and "how." Its contribution is not its discussion of campaigns and battles, but Lendon's perceptive analysis of *why* change in warfare occurs, and the ramifications of his answers.

In contrast to the modern world, technology was a limited factor in antiquity. Even the primary tools of war, swords and spears, shields and bows, changed only in detail. The ways of using them did vary according to time and place, but there was no pattern of what later historians (and soldiers) would call "progress." The Greek phalanx with its short spears yielded to the sarissa-carrying Macedonian version, which in turn fell before the pilum-and-gladius Roman legion. But by the 4th century B.C., the Roman infantry had adopted a spear-and-shield kind of fighting that was, in many ways, a throwback to the original hoplite tactics.

Ancient peoples were perfectly capable of thinking in terms of military progress: of new methods and new weapons replacing old ones. In warmaking, as in every aspect of their lives, the Greeks and Romans innovated; they borrowed; they adapted. But more often than not, they adapted by looking backward: finding something that had worked previously and updating it. In military matters particularly, the Greeks and Romans not merely respected but revered the past and its heroes—the "ghosts " of the title.

Lendon makes a provocative and convincing case that the Greek way of war was essentially shaped by Greek reverence for Homeric epic. Epic structured and focused the "primordial

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competitiveness" Lendon describes as characteristic of Greek culture. Epic gave Greek soldiers inspiration and legitimized the ways they actually fought. The chronic Greek ineffectiveness in siegecraft, according to Lendon, reflected in good part an unwillingness to copy from contemporary military systems outside the epic tradition.

That did not mean the Greeks imitated Homeric warfare in detail: Cultural influence was tempered by reality. Chariots, for example, remained the stuff of legacy. The Greek way of war in general had less and less to do with Homer. But few Greeks saw a distinction between evaluating and adapting Homeric warfare and fighting in the most effective way possible. Greek armies improved by using tradition as a guide.

Lendon contrasts this pattern with the development of Greek warfare at sea. There, too, some ritual elements persisted. On the whole, however, the absence of epic models left Hellenic ingenuity unrestrained. Clever deployment, rapid maneuvering, and outright trickery were the characteristics of Greeks at sea. He asks, rhetorically but provocatively, what would have been the consequences had Greek military history, as well, developed a "progressive" approanch to land war? Experience, the Peloponnesian War in particular, strongly suggests that Greek society might have destroyed itself through internecine conflict.

The Romans were no more progressive than the Greeks in their methods of warmaking. Lendon shows that innovation, even in the basic and familiar structure of the legion, came slowly, and was not influenced by operational considerations. The manipular legion conquered an empire despite its long list of tactical shortcomings: Its replacement by the cohort system came after the Mediterranean basin was under Rome's sway—the very time a modern army would be most likely to continue proven institutions and methods. The crucial factor in change was not the cohort's greater handiness, as observed by Roman pragmatists; it was, rather, the growing influence on Roman commanders of Greek military works emphasizing the importance of tactical and operational flexibility.

Corbis / Araldo de Luca

Lendon does not ignore the effect on military change of economic and social forces, or the complex and cutthroat politics of the later republic and empire. He emphasizes synergy between *virtus*, aggressive courage, and *disciplina*, the ethic of restraint, in shaping Roman military conduct and structure. Ultimately, however, he turns to the Romans' profound love of the past. Far from prefiguring defeat, the Roman army's persistence in maintaining ancient ways of doing things was, for centuries, fundamental to its military success.

In the empire's later years, however, Rome sought to reverse decline by recreating an epic past, as opposed to seeking inspiration there. The resulting antiquarianism only made matters worse: The ghosts won, and Rome fell. Yet Lendon's earlier question echoes: Had the Romans adopted a progressive, "Western" approach to innovation, would the long-run consequences for Europe have been positive?

On one level, *Soldiers & Ghosts* is an elegant inversion of the argument for a distinctive "Western way of war" based on the idea of progress. In the classical world, Lendon suggests, the most powerful engine for innovation was an admired image of the past. Men fought beside the shades of their ancestors for an inherited ethic. Instead of seeking fresh paradigms, the Greeks and Romans consciously poured their new wine into old bottles.

Lendon's presentation is also a useful jab at the neophiliacs who dominate 21st-century military systems. While these thinkers are often visibly conservative, relative to their wider societies, they insist on infinite and continuous innovation as the touchstone for military effectiveness. The regimental system is widely considered the basis of the British Army's demonstrated ability to punch above its weight. Academic and uniformed "reformers" have responded by eviscerating it. The United States Army seems well on the way to institutionalizing flux as its organizational principle. It is almost amusing to be reminded that two of the West's most formidable military cultures achieved greatness while consciously under the spell of the past.

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Lendon's conclusion also represents a fundamental challenge to the technocratic present-mindedness that currently informs American strategic planning and policy formation. War, Lendon asserts, is a manifestation of culture—arguably its ultimate manifestation, because if wars are not won, the culture becomes extinct. In contrast, America's military establishment and its intelligence community are not merely trained but conditioned to focus on analyzing war in the context of hard data which can be described specifically. That usually means material expressed in quantitative form. Cultural factors are considered anecdotal storytelling, mined from a grab bag of "unscientific" communications, useful to add tone and context to presentations, perhaps, but at the risk of misleading by irrelevance.

This perspective is hardly confined to the upper levels of government. Every era defines ultimate truth in its own way. The "geometric spirit" of the 18th century and the biological determinism of the 19th have given way to printouts and spreadsheets. Economics and sociology threaten to become branches of higher mathematics. Political science emphasizes its noun and neglects its adjective as it seeks ever more rigorous methodologies. History has lost touch with the liberal arts in an effort to replicate the mentality of the physical sciences. The business world has its bottom lines and quarterly reports. Psychiatry turns from the couch to the prescription.

We can cite examples almost at will. They only reinforce an image of tunnel vision that, in turn, invites more mirror-imaging: projecting values and attitudes onto other societies as opposed to studying and analyzing their cultures. This important book is a reminder that surface similarities can conceal profoundly, essentially different, matrices, and that, by extension, surface differences may be mere bumper stickers concealing common underlying values and desires.

It is a simple lesson, but one too often taught in blood and fire. ♦

Bound for Rome

Newman's long goodbye from the Church of England. **BY EDWARD SHORT**

In a letter to Mary Holmes, the governess with whom he would correspond throughout his life, John Henry Newman remarked that "religious truth is reached not by reasoning but by an inward perception." Readers of Volume IX of Newman's *Letters and Diaries*, covering May 1842-October 1843, when Newman resigned his living at St. Mary's church in Oxford and delivered his last Anglican sermon, will marvel at how he managed to receive this "inward perception" at a time when, as he said himself, the Oxford Movement was "going so fast that some of the wheels [were] catching fire." But manage he did, though the cost was considerable.

The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman
Volume IX: Littlemore and the Parting of Friends May 1842-October 1843
Edited by Francis J. McGrath
Oxford, 880 pp., $165

"All my then hopes," he wrote in *Apologia pro Vita Sua* (1864), "all my satisfaction at the apparent fulfillment of those hopes, was at an end in 1843."

About Newman's career at Oxford, Gladstone said that there was "no parallel in the academical history of Europe, unless you go back to the 12th century or the University of Paris." Now that it was ending, Newman felt a kind of death. To his sister Jemima he wrote, "My life is done, before it seems well begun." These are not the typical thoughts of a man in the prime of life, even a religious man. Yet for Newman, unsure about his future but well enough aware that his old Anglican life was winding down, death became an understandable preoccupation.

Newman was born in London in 1801. His mother was of French Huguenot stock and his father was a banker in the city. He had three sisters and two brothers. In 1822, he was elected a fellow of Oriel College. In 1828, he became vicar of the University Church of St. Mary the Virgin. There he gave the sermons that would stay with those who heard them for the rest of their lives. He helped to launch the Oxford Movement in 1833 to reinvigorate the Church of England. Advanced by a series of tracts, the Movement also became known as Tractarianism.

In seeking to defend Anglicanism, Newman gradually came to the conclusion that Roman Catholicism was the true church. He converted in 1845. After being ordained in Rome, he returned to England and founded the Birmingham Oratory. In 1853 he founded the Catholic University of Ireland in Dublin, and in 1859 the Oratory School, where Hilaire Belloc spent his schooldays and Gerard Manley Hopkins was a master. Newman was made a cardinal in 1879 and died in 1890.

Brilliantly edited by Francis McGrath, an Australian Marist brother and the author of *John Henry Newman: Universal Revelation* (1997), this volume opens with the Tractarians reeling from the outcry against *Tract 90*. To keep Anglo-Catholics from leaving the Anglican Church for Rome, Newman argued that the Thirty-Nine Articles, to which all Anglicans were required to subscribe, "do not oppose catholic teaching; they but partially oppose Roman dogma." He was, in effect, arguing for the original

Edward Short is working on a book about John Henry Newman and his contemporaries.

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Elizabethan inclusiveness of the Articles. Yet this was not how the Anglican bishops saw matters. For them, as for most of the English, the Articles were unambiguously Protestant and Newman was trying to subvert them. Indeed, some were convinced that it was Newman's plan to Romanize the English Church, and when that failed, to abscond with as many converts as he could. Newman was only telling the truth when he told Maria Giberne, a lifelong friend, "I am aiming at no idea at all."

Although increasingly convinced that the Church of Rome was the "true" church, he was still vicar of St. Mary's and sworn to uphold the Articles. As he wrote to his fellow Tractarian Henry Wilberforce in 1843, "I wish to be out of hot water [but] something or other is always sousing me again in it. It is so very difficult to steer between being hypocritical and revolutionary."

This book amply documents not only the rancor but the lunacy that gripped England after the publication of *Tract 90*. McGrath is particularly good at showing the paranoia that Newman inspired in some Protestant compatriots. He quotes a public letter from inhabitants of Blackburn to their bishop, in which they wrote:

> Adhering as we hope we ever shall do, to the principles [of the English Reformation], we can feel neither sympathy nor respect for any of those pioneers of Popery who are industriously labouring to undermine the walls which they have been appointed to defend, and who seem resolved to reduce our country again to that yoke of bondage which our forefathers were unable to endure. We rejoice therefore . . . that we have amongst us a faithful watchman on one of the chief towers of our citadel, vigilant to detect, fearless to denounce, and equally zealous to counteract the insidious devices of traitors within our gates, or the open and more honest assaults of the enemy without.

In Victorian England, Catholics were always fair game. Yet Newman got his own back, in his *Lectures on the Present Position of Catholics in England* (1851), in which he rollickingly mocked the anti-Catholic prejudices of many English Protestants. As for the lunacy swirling around him, one example will suffice. There was the case of Bernard Smith, vicar of Leadenhall, who converted to Catholicism in 1842. Shortly afterwards a letter appeared in the *Morning Herald*, signed by Smith, denying reports of his conversion and claiming that "some miscreant" had invented them. Then the real Smith wrote explaining that "the letter is a hoax and the statements it contains wholly unfounded." Thereafter, on nearly a weekly basis, letters went back and forth in various newspapers, elaborately disputing the status of Smith's religious affiliation. Had he really converted? Or was his conversion merely a ploy of Newman and the Tractarians?

While many around him were succumbing to the general hysteria, Newman remained calm. After first becoming aware, in 1839, that he *might* convert, he resolved to wait before making any decisive move. He could counsel others against precipitancy because he had given himself the same counsel. As it happened, he waited for six years. Of this period he wrote in the *Apologia*, "A death-bed has scarcely a history; it is a tedious decline, with seasons of rallying and seasons of falling back; and since the end is foreseen, or what is called a matter of time, it has little interest for the reader, especially if he has a kind heart." But the letters here reveal another more complicated history: his gradual acceptance of a new, if quite uncertain, Catholic future. His deathbed was also a cradle.

To understand how revolutionary converting to Roman Catholicism was in 19th-century England, we have to recognize that, for the English, it was not only spiritually misguided (Roman Catholicism being synonymous with corruption and superstition), but also profoundly un-English. When it became clear that Newman would soon commit the unthinkable and convert, the ranks of the Anglo-Catholic faithful were aggrieved. As one woman wrote Jemima, "A sound from Littlemore and St. Mary's seems to reach us even here . . . but, when the voice ceases . . . we shall have sad thoughts . . . Such *was* our guide, but he has left us to seek his own path—our champion has deserted us—our watchman whose cry used to cheer us is heard no more."

Still, Newman was adamant about dissuading impetuous would-be converts from taking a step they might regret. "Converts to Rome," he insisted, must "not go out from St. Mary's parsonage." The career of Richard Waldo Sibthorp became the great cautionary tale. A fellow of Magdalen College, Sibthorp converted in 1841 and was ordained a priest in 1842. Shortly thereafter, while holidaying on the Isle of Wight, he began to have second thoughts. In 1843, he converted back to Anglicanism, claiming that it was the sea air that convinced him that Rome was, after all, the "great whore."

Denounced by the Anglican episcopate, cut by friends, vilified by newspapers, Newman retreated to the lay community he had set up at nearby Littlemore, only venturing out to give sermons at St. Mary's or meet friends in Oxford. One memorable meeting was with Miss Holmes, the governess, who would later go on to correspond with William Makepeace Thackeray and give music lessons to his daughters. Newman arranged for them to lunch in his rooms at Oriel, but the meeting was a flop. Miss Holmes was unprepared for Newman's youth; having immersed herself in his writings, she assumed that he was much older. No one so young, she thought, could be as wise as he seemed in his writings. Nevertheless, she would become one of Newman's favorite correspondents.

The book sheds interesting light on Newman's contacts with Americans. Newman was particularly taken with Jacob Abbott (1803-79), whose *The Corner Stone* he had attacked in *Tract 73*. When Abbott unexpectedly showed up in Oxford in the summer of 1843, Newman apologized for the attack and offered to excise the offending passage, but Abbott graciously declined. Later, Newman wrote, "We talked on various matters

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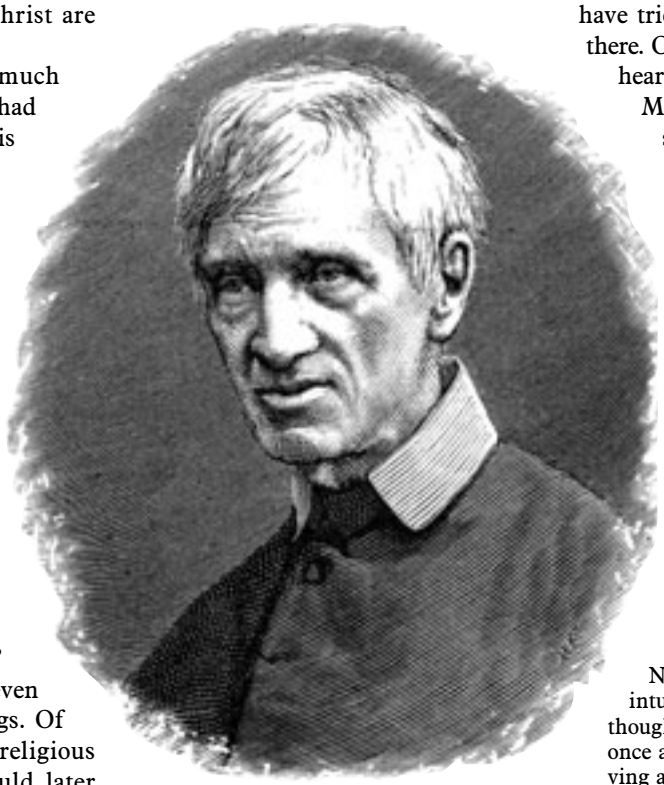
for an hour or so, and when he rose to go I offered him my *Church of the Fathers*—in which he made me put my name . . . I showed him on his way, accompanying him in the twilight through the village . . . and we parted with a good deal of warm feeling. He is a Congregationalist Minister—not much above 30, I should think—with somewhat of the New England twang, but very quiet in manner and unaffected. How dreadful it is that the sheep of Christ are scattered to and fro. . . . "

Newman's letters reveal much about Newman himself. He had a good sense of humor. To his Aunt Elizabeth, about Littlemore, he wrote: "Our garden improves—we have no snowdrops but crocuses in plenty. We have gained a squire lately, of the name of Crawley, a very excellent man and his wife too. They are friends of Copeland's and will be a great 'acquisition,' as it is called, to the place. . . . So we are progressing, and in a few years, when we have found a spa, we shall be a fashionable watering place."

He was self-deprecatory, even dismissive about his writings. Of his brilliant sermon on religious development, which he would later expand into *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (1845), he wrote "If any one values his luncheon on Thursday, he must not go to hear me at St. Mary's, for my sermon is of portentous length—and my only satisfaction is that, if any persons go out of curiosity, they will be punished." About his *Fifteen Sermons Preached Before the University of Oxford between 1826 and 1843*, he was even more impatient: "I am publishing my University Sermons, which will be thought sad dull affairs—but having got through a subject I wish to get rid of it."

The letters reveal the humility of the man. For all the immense influence he had on his contemporaries, Newman was uncomfortable with the very notion of influence. "I assure you," he wrote one correspondent, "nothing has haunted me more continually for years than the idea that undergraduates are trusting me more than they should—and I have done many things by way of preventing it." In another letter to John Keble, his confidant and fellow Tractarian, he wrote: "I am commonly very sluggish and think it a simple bore or nuisance to have to move or to witness movements . . . as to influencing people, making points, advancing and so on, I do not think these are matters which engross or engage me or even interest me."



John Henry Newman, 1870

"Of all persons," he confessed to another correspondent, "*I* need guidance and comfort most."

In light of this distaste for influence, the sway he held over others was all the more extraordinary. Matthew Arnold spoke for many of his agnostic contemporaries when he wrote Newman in 1871: "We are all of us carried in ways not of our own making or choosing but nothing can ever do away the effects you have produced on me, for it consists in a general disposition of mind rather than in a particular set of ideas. In all the conflicts I have with modern Liberalism and Dissent, and with their pretensions and shortcomings, I recognize your work." In the poetry of Arthur Hugh Clough, which delves unsparingly into the misgivings of unbelief, the appeal of Newman was ubiquitous. Clough might have tried to resist, but it was always there. Clough's friend J.C. Shairp, who heard Newman's sermons at St. Mary's and later became professor of poetry at Oxford, spoke for many of his contemporaries when he said that Newman was "a man in many ways the most remarkable that England has seen during this century, perhaps the most remarkable whom the English Church has produced in any century."

What was it about him? Sir Frederick Rogers, a close friend, who later became a cabinet minister, gave a good account of his personal appeal.

> Newman seemed to have an intuitive perception of all that you thought and felt, so that he caught at once all that you meant or were driving at in a sentiment, a philosophical reflection, or a joke. . . . And so there was in talking with him that combination of liveliness and repose which constitutes ease; you seemed to be talking with a better kind of self, which was drawing you upwards. Newman's general characteristics—his genius, his depth of purpose; his hatred of pomp and affectation; his piercing insight into the workings of the human mind . . . are all matters of history.

Mark Pattison had been a thoroughgoing Tractarian from 1840 to 1842, but when Newman converted, he repudiated the Movement, charging that "the 'Tracts' desolated Oxford life, and suspended, for an indefinite period, all science, humane letters, and the first strivings of intellectual freedom." Yet not even Pattison could

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deny the power of Newman's influence: "Thin, pale, and with large lustrous eyes piercing through this veil of men and things," he wrote, "he hardly seemed made for this world. But his influence had in it something of magic. It was never possible to be a quarter-of-an-hour in his company without a warm feeling of being invited to take an onward step. . . . Newman always tried to reach the heart and understanding of those with whom he had to do."

William Lockhart, who spent some time at Littlemore, and converted in 1843, put it best when he spoke of Newman's "simplicity, meekness and humility; God, not self, was the centre of all his thoughts." He was "a seer who saw God, and spoke that which he had seen."

The letters in this volume, like those throughout this 33-volume series, are a fascinating record of a fascinating man. Francis McGrath has done a splendid job of including contemporary documents that illumine different aspects of the period, and not only excerpts from newspapers and letters but choice passages from the voluminous primary and secondary literature.

On Christmas Eve 1842, H.A. Woodgate, rector of Holy Trinity Church, Birmingham, wrote Newman asking him if he could suggest a motto for a new house that his brother had recently built. Newman wrote back suggesting a tag from Virgil: *Uno avulso non deficit alter*—"When one thing is torn away, another succeeds." As it happened, Woodgate's brother chose another motto, but it would have worked for Newman himself. However leery he might have been of success—in one letter he says that "I do not think I have ever been sanguine of success *in my day* or at all"—he did hope that in tearing himself away from the Church of England he was preparing himself for success of another kind, even if it looked to the world like the most dismal failure.

In any case, he was convinced, as he wrote Jemima, after resigning his living at St. Mary's, that "Every thing that one does honestly, sincerely, with prayer, with advice, must turn to good." ♦

God's Politics

Rendering to Caesar what is Caesar's, and sorting out the rest. **BY TERRY EASTLAND**

Of the many books on church and state published in recent years, most approach the subject from the political side of things. This one, by Darryl Hart, the prolific historian of religion in America, is different. It begins with a question from the religious side: "What does Christianity require of its adherents politically?" This question, he says, invites another: What kind of faith is Christianity—that is, what is its "religious meaning"?

A Secular Faith
Why Christianity Favors the Separation of Church and State
by Darryl Hart
Ivan R. Dee, 288 pp., $26.95

Emphasizing the teaching of Jesus that "My Kingdom is not of this world," Hart, a conservative Protestant and former professor of church history at Westminster Seminary in California, writes that Christianity is "essentially a spiritual and eternal faith, one occupied with a world to come rather than the passing and temporal affairs of this world." It "has very little to say about politics or the ordering of society." Indeed, it is "apolitical" in the sense that "its message and means, while not indifferent to civil society, transcend all political rivalries."

Hart might have titled his book *A Spiritual Faith* or *An Eternal Faith*, but neither would be as provocative as *A Secular Faith*. Christians who think "secular" means godless or antireligious may think that "a secular faith" must mean a faith without God, a Christianity without Christ. But for Hart, a secular faith means no such thing.

He observes that "secular" derives from the Latin *seclorum*, which means "age" or "generation . . . a definite period of time and especially its provisional or temporal quality." Historic Christianity, he says, has always understood the history between the first and second advents of Christ to be an in-between time.

That's one sense—and it should not be controversial—in which Hart understands Christianity as a secular faith. The other sense has to do with how Christianity regards and relates to the state and society.

"While Israel fused the political and religious by making Judaism the law of the land," Hart writes, "Christianity separated what the Old Testament bound together." In time Christianity, via Protestantism, stimulated questions about "whether church authority extended to all the spheres of life implied by the pattern of Christendom or the Holy Roman Empire." The result of that questioning was "to reduce the church's sway over European society"—which reduction is commonly known as "secularization." For Hart, Christianity is a secular faith because of its contribution to that development.

Hart should not be read here to deny an essential Christian teaching: That Christ has authority over all things, including those denominated as secular. His point is that Christ is Lord but rules in different ways over the world and the church. As Michael Horton, Hart's former Westminster colleague, has written, God "rules the world through providence and common grace, while he rules the church through Word, sacrament, and covenantal nurture."

Terry Eastland is publisher of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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Hart, now director of academic projects and faculty development at the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, addresses a basic objection to his position—that culture (including politics) inevitably proceeds from cult, meaning religion. Hart's response is, first, that Christianity "was planted and grew in cultural soils that were already well tilled and flourishing," and, second and more important, that neither Jesus nor the apostles taught that Christianity was to be the basis for Christian culture or society. Hart makes the compelling point that Christianity "was a religion without a specific land, city, or place" and that "its teaching transcended the cult-culture relationship as a faith for people from any ethnic background."

Hart's understanding of Christianity as a secular faith is not wrong, in the ways he defines it. Nor is he wrong to say that Christianity supports "the separation of church and state," as opposed to the union of, or an alliance between, church and state. As Hart points out, Christ famously told his disciples to render to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's, distinguishing between the two jurisdictions of church and state.

Significantly, the distinction made by Christ was not found in Christianity's precursor or competitor religions, a point Bernard Lewis has made in contrasting Islam to Christianity (and whose work Hart cites). The distinction limits the church, for it may not run the state, and it limits the state, for it may not run the church—nor, for that matter, claim to be God. The distinction makes possible civil society, even as it points to a political doctrine of religious liberty, since the state may not intervene in the rendering of what is God's to God. Hart says Christianity does not yield any social or political norms, but the distinction between church and state is surely a norm of enormous political importance.

A Secular Faith is not simply an explication of what Christianity teaches and requires of its adherents politically. Indeed, "the point of this book," writes Hart, "is to try to complicate contemporary understandings of the relationship between Christianity and liberal democracy in the United States."

AP

JFK at St. John's Episcopal Church, Washington

Thus, Hart demonstrates the difficulties in regarding America as "a city on a hill," at least as Christ used that phrase in the Sermon on the Mount. Most commentators have concluded that Christ understood such a city to be the church. The metaphor has special resonance in America because John Winthrop, first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, used it in his sermon on board the *Arbella* "to identify the city of which Christ spoke with the society that the English would establish in the New World." Hart rightly observes that the city on a hill that the Puritans hoped to build, and which later Christians believed America to be, was "an impossibility." The Puritans were guilty of confusing "the earthly and heavenly cities," says Hart, who, it should be apparent, has been deeply influenced by Augustine's *City of God*.

Hart also asks for precision in the usage of two terms, "religious liberty" and "Christian liberty." He explains that the latter is not political but spiritual, meaning freedom from the guilt of sin. Yet "some Christians," he says, "feel that if they may not express their faith in public openly"—by, say, locating a crèche in front of a town hall—"they lack religious liberty." Hart's point is that whatever liberty such Christians think they may lack, they cannot be talking about Christian liberty.

Hart also effectively challenges the ostensible need for public declarations that the nation is "under God." Hart notes that when Christ was asked to whom it is lawful to pay taxes, and spoke of the need to render to Caesar and also to God, he was holding a coin with Ceasar's head on it, not one that said "in God we trust." Implicitly, Christ was making the point that a government may have legitimacy even if it does not acknowledge that it is "under God." Hart concludes that "if Christianity is a religion less concerned with statecraft than with soulcraft, Christian attempts to place the United States 'under God' are unnecessary and may actually be a departure from the original teachings of Christ."

A Secular Faith has some loose ends. The little that Christianity does say about politics or the ordering of society, notes Hart, concerns "certain notions about men and women being created in the image of God or about the sinfulness of human nature and about the legitimacy of personal property." They "have implications for politics," he says. Yet he doesn't spell them out.

Also, while he makes clear that individuals (and not their churches) may

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be involved in politics, he fails to clarify whether they may consider any "notions" taken from their faith—such as the aforementioned ones about creation or sin or personal property—in their political pursuits. Nor does Hart adequately discuss the nature of government: "The work of government," he writes, "lacks any overtly religious or spiritual purpose." That is word-for-word true, but the adjective "overtly" means that government might still have such a purpose. And when construed as an institution of common grace, in a world God rules, it may be said to have a purpose—although, as Hart argues, it is a purpose not to be confused with the redemptive one that belongs to the church.

On matters of politics, Hart is not always the surest guide. In his view there is so much religion in the public square nowadays, and such widespread acceptance of its presence, that (as he puts it) "people without belief . . . may be the real oddity." Yet people without belief aren't so odd, if by that he means few in number. In fact, the number of people without belief, or who are agnostics or atheists, has been increasing rapidly since the late 1960s. And most of them are affiliated with the Democratic party. Any account of religion and politics in the past 40 years must consider the presence and influence of this large and growing segment of the population.

Still, this book makes a valuable contribution to the discussion of church and state. Darryl Hart is right to be wary of faith-based politics because of the ways it can trivialize faith. And he is right to be concerned about believers who misconstrue their faith when they step into the public square. Hart's achievement is to recover for our time the Augustinian perspective in which history is the story of two cities during the *seclorum* of the church—the City of Man and the City of God. Hart rightly warns against conflating the two, reminding those Christians in America who read his book that "the church is to be a Christian as opposed to an American institution."

Those with ears to hear, let them hear clearly. ♦

Sofia's Choice

The teen queen shops till her head drops.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

Sofia Coppola began her writing career at the age of 17 as the coauthor of "Life Without Zoe," a 30-minute film her father, Francis Ford Coppola, directed as part of a 1989 anthology called *New York Stories*. It's the plotless tale of a happy little rich girl named Zoe who lives in the Sherry-Netherland Hotel and rallies her rich little friends with the cry, "Let's go shopping!" Everybody loves Zoe, from the elevator man to the doorman to the homeless man who lives in a carton down the block.

Marie Antoinette
Directed by Sofia Coppola

A shameless ripoff of Kay Thompson's *Eloise*, down to the theft of a hotel location and even the intersection at which Thompson's 6-year-old lived (the Sherry-Netherland sits across Fifth Avenue from Eloise's home in the Plaza), "Life Without Zoe" seems intended to celebrate the exuberant innocence of Sofia's own childhood. It fails, and fails spectacularly, because there's nothing exuberant or innocent about Zoe's relentless materialism. Evidently Coppola found his daughter's hunger to shop, shop, shop so charming as to be worthy of celluloid immortality, but "Life Without Zoe" demonstrates that daddies aren't always the best judges of their daughter's questionable charms.

"Life Without Zoe" is only of retrospective value because it offers a guide to the inexplicably celebrated work of Sofia Coppola, who deserves an august spot on the short list of most overrated writer-directors in Hollywood history. Two years ago she won an Oscar for a screenplay to a movie called *Lost in Translation* that had no narrative line, no defined characters, and very little dialogue. She was nominated for her direction of the film as well, which was certainly a very nice feather in her cap but probably a little galling for the Hong Kong filmmaker Wong Kar-Wai, whose very individual style Coppola appropriated for her endless travelogue of Tokyo.

Lost in Translation was her second film. Her first, *The Virgin Suicides*, is about five sisters who kill themselves for no particular reason except to look lovely in their diaphanous dresses as they jump from a roof. Coppola is a fashion designer as well as a filmmaker, and her camera fetishizes clothing the way porn fetishizes the naked body—in the most blunt way possible, leaving nothing whatsoever to the imagination.

Now, with her third film, Coppola has come full circle. There is a profound connection between the let's-go-shopping sensibility expressed in "Life Without Zoe" and the let-them-eat-cake sensibility expressed in her newest film, *Marie Antoinette*. Coppola's *Marie Antoinette* is a movie about Marie Antoinette that could have been made *by* Marie Antoinette. Or by Zoe.

Just like Zoe, Marie (Kirsten Dunst) is a teenager living in a grand setting without her parents. On the one hand, Versailles is a strange and cold place where people watch her getting dressed in the morning. On the other hand, the furniture and the wall décor are magnificent. (Coppola got permission to shoot in and around the actual Palace of Versailles.) After a period of adjustment, Marie gets to spend her days picking out shoes and wigs and dresses.

John Podhoretz is THE WEEKLY STANDARD*'s movie critic.*

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Marie doesn't shout "Let's go shopping," but she might just as well. As writer-director, Coppola basically does the shouting for Marie Antoinette, since her movie only comes alive in these sequences. As a fashion designer, she lingers over the bends and folds and creases in fabrics and leathers as though she's selling them to us. Marie and her bubbly friends giggle and smile as the catchy pop tune "I Want Candy" plays on the soundtrack. They eat bonbons and bring some vim and vigor to the starchy and uptight world of the French court.

Throughout *Marie Antoinette*, Coppola draws a parallel between one of history's most controversial women and the soon-to-be-forgotten famous-for-being-famous starlets of our day, whose hijinks are featured weekly on the covers of *People* and *Us Weekly*. Coppola's Marie is Jessica Simpson crossed with Paris Hilton crossed with Lindsay Lohan. And make no mistake: Coppola is on Jessica-Paris-Lindsay's side. After all, who knows better about the savagery to which gossips can subject a sweet young thing? When Sofia's father cast his beloved daughter as Michael Corleone's beloved daughter in *Godfather III*, she was tarred, feathered, and pilloried for her amateurish performance.

Surely Coppola experienced some sense of fellowship upon learning the details of Marie Antoinette's life: She was married off at 14 by her empress-mother to a 15-year-old for the sole purpose of giving birth to an heir to the French throne who would solidify the bond between Austria and France, only to become the object of scorn and censure because no heir was produced for many years. Sofia was an 18-year-old Hollywood princess when Francis told her to take over the part Winona Ryder had fled in the most anticipated film in years. She was just doing what her royal daddy told her to do to save his epic, and found herself raked over the coals when she never sought to be an actress in the first place.

The problem with Sofia's clear identification with Marie is this: *Godfather III* is a movie; France is a country. *Godfather III* failed at the box office. The misconduct of Marie Antoinette and her husband, Louis XVI, helped bring about the most disastrous experiment in violent social change the world had ever seen.

Sony Pictures courtesy Everett Collection

Kirsten Dunst as Marie Antoinette

You would hardly know that the reign of Louis XVI was a time of political, ideological, and social ferment in France. In the last 15 minutes of *Marie Antoinette*, a mob suddenly appears at the gates of Versailles screaming and throwing things. Why have they come? Judging from the tone of Coppola's movie, a contemporary audience would be excused for thinking a bunch of French teenagers had sent each other instant messages informing everybody there was going to be a rave in the Versailles basement. And then got mad when the guards told them the party had been called off.

The French Revolution is depicted as follows: a room in Versailles where the chandelier has been smashed on the floor. For Sofia Coppola, apparently, the destruction of quality crystal is a horror beyond imagining. Nothing more needs to be said. As for me, I'm, like, you know, whatever. ♦

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Parody

NOVEMBER 6, 2006

BRANSON BUILDS BOMB

Emphasizes 'Peaceful, Humanitarian' Purposes

CLAIMS BREAKTHROUGH IN NUCLEAR WEAPON DESIGN, DELIVERY

By JOHN BURNS and JUDITH MILLER

NECKAR ISLAND, B.V.I. — British entrepreneur Sir Richard Branson has once again astonished the world with his announcement today that his previously secret company, Virgin Atomic, has successfully tested a nuclear weapon in a shaft 2,500 feet beneath the surface of Branson's privately owned Neckar Island in the Caribbean at 3:00 PM local time yesterday. The United States Geological Survey has confirmed a "mild" seismic event at that time—2.6 on the Richter scale—with the Virgin island as the epicenter.

Branson revealed that the device was a novel, "pure fusion" neutron bomb, utilizing a metastable nuclear isomer trigger, instead of plutonium or enriched uranium, to initiate a thermonuclear reaction. Branson described the device, nicknamed "Banger One," as "shaped like, well, you know, a big, fat sausage," about eight inches long and three inches in diameter, weighing nine pounds, with a yield equivalent to approximately 500 tons of TNT.

Nuclear deterrence, said Branson, has proven its usefulness over many decades, but the entry cost can be prohibitively high. Under the Virgin Atomic business model, the company would lease nuclear deterrence at highly affordable rates. He said that Virgin Atomic has already had "serious inquiries" from two dozen countries including South Korea, Taiwan, Bahrain, and Colombia, as well as from the state of Texas and computer giant Microsoft.

Yaprak Yshevny for VMT World Image

Entrepreneur Sir Richard Branson at the announcement of a successful nuclear-weaponry test conducted by his new company, Virgin Atomic. The announcement was made at a press conference at the island site of the underground test.

Branson stated that several "credible" delivery modes were available, including an unmanned suborbital vehicle and, as he put it, "simply sending the device to the target via FedEx."

"Forty years ago no one would have dreamed of space travel as a private business," said Branson. "Commercial nuclear weapons are an obvious and inevitable development in an entrepreneurial environment of privatization and globalization, and we at Virgin Atomic are excited and proud to be in the forefront."

(See CEO ARMS RACE, p. A4)

Madonna Adopts African Highway

By SETH ZIM

the weekly Standard

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